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In Life's Springtime



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In Life's Springtime

*Thy people offer themselves willingly
In the day of thy power, in holy array:
Out of the womb of the morning
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

Ps. 110: 3.



“What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Mark. 10:17

In Life's Springtime



A DEVOTIONAL BOOK
for
the Young People of America
with Contributions by Lutheran
Pastors and Professors
Representing Ten Nationalities

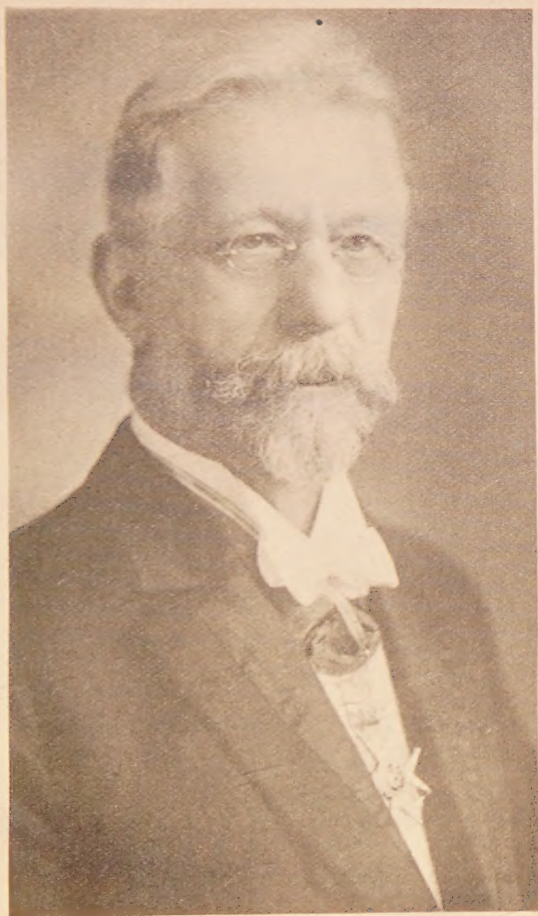
Compiled and Published by
JOHANNES HOIFJELD, Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church
25th Ave. W. and 3rd St., Duluth, Minn.

Minneapolis, Minnesota
General Printing Company
1921

To The
Reverend Marcus O. Bockman, D. D.

*Professor in New Testament Exegesis and President of Luther Theological Seminary
Como & Pierce Avenues, St. Anthony Park,
St. Paul, Minnesota.*

*In Gratitude For His Distinguished Christian
Services and Inspiring Towering Personality
Ever Pointing Heavenward This Little Devotional
Book is Lovingly Dedicated.*



Prof. Markus O. Bockman

*Beautiful sunrise in springtime of life
Calling the dormant from slumber.
O, how thy blessing is glorious and rife
Dispelling night's gloom and cumber.
Heavenly Sun, My Lord, now bring
Blossoms of Paradise upon Thy Wing.*
— J. H.

Let no man despise thy youth;
but be thou an example
to them that believe,
in word, in manner of life,
in love, in faith, in purity.
— Paul

FOREWORD.

This present volume is a devotional book for young people. It is a collection of meditations written by Lutheran pastors and teachers in the United States. The devotions may either be read consecutively as morning or evening devotions or for meditations on Sundays and other holidays, according to the *Table of Sunday Meditations for the Church Year*.

It has been the prayerful endeavor of the compiler and publisher to offer the young people of the Lutheran church of America an attractive, dependable and helpful book of devotions. Would to God that it may become a great blessing even outside of the Lutheran church.

But this is not a denominational book. The aim has been, from beginning to end, to lead souls into the blessed green pastures of the Lord.

Although the original plans and arrangement of the book were partly destroyed by late replies and manuscripts, we trust that the book in its present appearance will, nevertheless, prove a blessing to the young and thus strengthen the church of God.

Every one who reads these lines may cooperate with us by introducing the book into smaller and larger circles. Every home library and public library in our country should have one.

We also entertain the hope that "*In Life's Springtime*" may become a popular present for the sublimest occasions in the spring time of life, like confirmation and marriage. It ought also to be a suitable gift for Christmas, birthday, and graduation.

A sincere gratitude is conveyed to all who have assisted in the making of this book by rendering contributions, translations, suggestions etc. God bless you all and may our mutual efforts be crowned with the salvation and edification of many precious, immortal souls.

The reason for accompanying each meditation with the picture of its respective contributor is to make the book as attractive as possible to the eye of the youth, for thereby to gain the desired attention.

P. S. It has already been suggested that an extraction of 12 or 15 of the most adaptable meditations for the age of adolescence be published and put on the market at a low price. This matter shall have our most earnest consideration.

"In Life's Evening" will be published, God willing, next year.

Sincerely,

JOHANNES HÖIFJELD.

310 25th Ave. W., Duluth, Minn.

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P. S. * Preceding a meditation's title means that it is translated.
10 Nationalities are represented in this volume.

A NEW VISION.

(W. M. HAGEN.)

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Psalm 119:18.



In this beautiful Bible prayer the child of God finds an inspiring expression of his heart's desires.

Our spiritual yearnings may be many and varied according to difference in our age and vocation in life. But the real need of a true follower of God is or should always be: To get a clearer and more comprehensive vision of God's wonderful revelation as it is recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Without this vision we are left in utter darkness. But the Holy Spirit creates in us a desire to see light in God's light, and to become partakers of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" in His blessed kingdom on earth.

Already, perhaps, you are conscious of the Spirit's enlightenment as to your share of divine grace, of the spiritual insight and strength of character that you are longing for. But often you find it exceedingly difficult to discern rightly your precious inheritance or to believe and hold fast that which God has provided for you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear friend, let your prayer arise from your heart to your God: "Open thou mine eyes!" Let it be your daily concern to ask Him, to wait upon the Lord who will give you the deeper understanding, strengthen your faith and turn your will more and more Godward. The spiritual senses, the capacity for heavenly visions, the Lord himself will work out in you. Trust Him fully. And be diligent in reading and meditating "the holy scriptures,

which are able to make you wise unto salvation through each which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 3:15.

He has promised that the Spirit of truth will guide us into all truth and reveal unto us the things which God has prepared for them that love him.

And you shall come to behold wonderful things, things which will be food for your soul and joy for your heart; a new vision of the loving and forgiving Father in heaven, a clearer vision of Christ our Savior, "who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.

Accept with true meekness and a thankful heart whatever the Lord may be pleased to reveal to you out of His Word, remembering, that God's plan is that you may be perfected and "meet for the master's use."

The new vision of God and his tender mercies toward the sinful world is not granted to any being for self-enjoyment or self-glorification; but it is given in order that God may be glorified on earth as He is praised in heaven.

We do well not to be disobedient to the heavenly vision which is a call to us to become co-laborers with Christ, to proclaim throughout the world his wonderful work of salvation.

"Open mine eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open mine eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!" Amen.



IN STEP WITH GOD.

(B. B. JANSSON.)

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.—Eph. 5 : 1-2.



"Followers of God." What a perfect definition of Christian men and Christian women. As such we must be seen and known by the world, if we are true to our calling. But above all, we must know ourselves as such, if we are to be at peace with ourselves.

How follow God? "As dear children." Herein we have the perfect relation between God and man. Father and child,—that is the relation as taught by Christ. The child follows the father, not reluctantly, but gladly, as a dear child follows its beloved father.

I have before me a very vivid picture of a husky boy who has been permitted to go down town with his father. How manfully proud and happy he is as he follows his father, how he makes sure to keep in step with him, do as he does and behave towards others as he. In like manner are we to be followers of God as these children.

Following implies walking. If we follow God, we walk with God—and we do our best to keep step with Him. *How* can we keep step with God? That can be done in one way only: *walk in love*. God is love, and he who would walk and keep step with God, must walk in love.

What is it, to walk in love? It means first of all that we have at all time within ourselves that wonderful feeling of peace

and goodwill towards everything. It means that we have within ourselves at all times that noble spirit of joy and love that fills our hearts on Christmas Day. To walk in love is to make ones entire life a bright Christmas day, because of the sun of the love that shines within us.

But it must be more than a mere sentiment within. Love within must be fed out and put into action. Walking in love, is love in action. Now, it is always more difficult to do things than merely to feel things and even to say things.

And here is where we, nominal Christians, so often fail. We do not lack the beautiful sentiments on Sunday and at holy festivals, but we fail to carry them into action. When we get back to work Monday morning and meet with the various irritations of every day life, the sweet spirit of love and kindness seems to forsake us all too soon.

In our homes, among our friends, and when we meet with the ruffled spirits and bad tempers of our companions, we soon get out of step with God, love leaves us, and we become possessed with an evil spirit of spite and strife, jealousy and envy, pride and selfishness. It therefore becomes evident that we need help.

We cannot walk in love and follow God as dear children, except we be guided by a superior personality. Only one can guide us, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And to Him the Apostle points in the text and says: *As Christ*,—do this as Christ did it.

In walking with God and living the love-life, Christ is our model, our example. In the text two words are used to show us how Christ walked in love, and He was always in step with the Father. The words are *Offering* and *Sacrifice*. Offering always means something that is brought forward and given from religious motives. As Christ offered up His life on the Altar of love, so our lives must be a religious offering to God and humanity.

Christ also gave Himself as a sacrifice, an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Sacrifice always implies self-inflicted, voluntary, vicarious suffering for love's sake. And just this will always be the criterion: *How much can you sacrifice and how much are*

you willing to suffer because of the Christian love that is within you?

What a grand and manly thing it is to walk in love, keep in step with God,—follow God as dear Children. Without Christ we cannot do it. In Christ and by the aid of the Holy Spirit we can.

Help us, O, God, for Christs sake.

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

Amen.



MAN DEVISETH—GOD DIRECTETH.

(C. G. EIDNESS.)

“A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.”
Proverbs 16:9.



It is man’s privilege to plan and to go wherever he pleases; but he is responsible for all his deeds. The inferior creatures, who are governed by sense and natural instinct, have not this privilege. They all live within the confines of God’s invisible lines.

Man’s liberty is wonderful! “In his heart he devises his way,” but as a dependent creature, man is subject to the dominion of God; therefore, the Lord directs the steps of man.

God is the ruler of all things, also the thought and action of man. It may seem strange, nevertheless it is true: How often, my young friend, you planned to go somewhere, or to do some thing, but you could neither go nor do, what you intended. “It is not in man, that walketh to direct his steps.” (Jer. 10: 23.) It was God in His providence, who in His loving dispensation was directing your steps. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Is. 55: 89.)

“Man proposes, but God disposes.”

This truth, my dear young friend, should bring you to commit, with humble confidence in God, all your affairs, and as a child looks to her parents for maintainance in life, so should you, as

a child of God, unconditionally surrender your ways and steps to the fatherly guidance of the Lord's hand.

Since God has given man such a wonderful liberty, as to devise his way, it is a shame for him, if he does not devise this way, pleasing to God, and make its end to the glory of God's name.

Nevertheless we ask: How can the heart of man and his actions be pleasing to God, when "man's heart is evil from his youth?" (Gen. 8: 2.)

There is only one remedy given, that is able to change man's heart so it will please God.

That remedy is God's own creating power, through the Holy Spirit. It was a new created heart, a heart that could think clean thoughts, and the actions that would be pleasing to the Lord, that David desired, when he prayed: "Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit." (Ps. 51: 9,) and thus said the Lord: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezek. 36: 21—27.) "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11: 20.)

These were God's promises to the people of old, and it is this promise to day, and as a repentant sinner, man may devise his way, and God will direct his steps.

Dear friend: Perhaps, many of the plans you laid, have not been carried out. Maybe, the most skillfull suggestions of all your decisions, have failed, and to day, your heart is filled with bitter disappointment.

Probably, your friends, have succeeded in their undertaking in life, while your existence is a great burden to yourself.

Friend! "Be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say on the Lord." (Ps. 27: 14.)

The Lord is the same to-day, as yesterday, and in "whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Plead with the Psalmist: "Teach me thy way, O Lord: I will walk in thy

truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God with all my heart: And I will glorify thy name for evermore." (Ps. 86: 11—12.)

Now! the Lord will direct your steps, and lead you in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake, and your daily meditation will be: "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." (Ps. 119: 35—36.)

Your steps are now in harmony with the Lord, and your pilgrimage brings you, every day, nearer and nearer your heavenly home, where there is no disappointment.

His purpose will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Amen.



FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

(G. H. GERBERDING.)

Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto Thee to hide me. Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God; Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Psalm 143: 8-10.



This is a Psalm of depression and rising again. It is the last of the seven Penitential Psalms. We are not certain who wrote it. If it is not one of Davids Psalms it certainly expresses his experience, his depression under suffering and persecution, as also his laying hold of God and letting God lift him out of his valley of humiliation. You and I, dear reader,

can find here our own experience and the source of our help.

We also have our times of depression. No one can escape them. Things do not always go our way. At times everything seems to go against us. Those whom we trusted fail us or betray us, our spirit sinks.

We feel as if God had forgotten us. We are tempted to doubt, we become depressed, we are despondent, we have no taste for God's Word, we neglect our Bible, we don't feel like going to Church, we rob ourselves of sermons and sacraments, we do not feel like praying. Our spiritual life seems to be drying up. Its wells and fountains are choked up. There are no showers from above. We feel like them that go down into the pit, we are sinking into the slough of despond. We are in danger, where is the trouble?

What is wrong? We must know. We have been looking at our troubles, we have been brooding over them, we have been thinking of our enemies, we have become bitter and rebellious, we have nursed our doubts and despondencies. They grow by nursing. They grow into mountains. They threaten to fall on us and crush us.

Why are we looking down instead of up? Why are we looking at our troubles instead of looking at our God? Why are we listening to our own complainings instead of listening to our God?

We are deaf to the voices from above. We need to turn our ears upward. We need to cry: "Cause me to hear." We need to hear God. "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth."

Back to our Bible! There God speaks. Hear Him! Hear His voice is the voice of compassion. "He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust." His voice is the voice of love. It speaks comfort, it speaks loving kindness. It speaks hope.

Let us close our ears to the voices of false friends and of enemies. God's voice is always true. His great loving heart is true. "Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness."

Cause me to hear it in the morning. The night has depressed me. Its dark made me afraid in the night. I had my ear turned away from God. I was listening to voices, of doubt and despair. Weeping filled the night.

But now it is morning. Thy mercies are new again. Thou satisfieth us early with Thy goodness. Help me to turn my ear to Thee in the morning. Speak Thine *Ephata*. Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning. In Thee do I trust.

Oh forgive my mistrust. Lord increase my faith. Help mine unbelief!

Now I hear again Thy morning voice. Faith has come again by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Now I do lift up my soul into Thee. Trusting Thy living and life-giving Word. I can again pray: "Deliver me oh God from mine enemies. I flee unto Thee to hide me. Now, Lord, cause me to know Thy way. Help me to walk in it. There no enemy can hurt me.

Oh show me out of Thy Word, show me Thy way every morning, so may I start every day with Thee, so may I go forth, bravely, hopefully, happily, joyfully, with the morning dew of God's grace upon me.

And when troubles come again, when enemies beset me, when the devil tempts me sorely, when by my own reason or strength I can neither escape nor overcome, then hide me. As I flee to Thee, hide me in the secret of Thy presence. Hide me under the cross of Christ!

He loved me! He redeemed me! He gave Himself for me! He for me! He the sinless one, for me the sinful one. He, the innocent for me the guilty. For me He gave Himself. In His atonement I trust, His righteousness is my covering. Hide me there.

Thou art my God! Teach me Thy will. Help me to know it. Help me to do it. Thou art my God. Thy spirit is good. Lead me into the land of uprightness.

Glorious Lord, Thyself impart!

Light of Light, from God proceeding,

Open Thou our ears and heart,

Help us by Thy Spirit's pleading,

Hear the cry Thy people raises,

Hear, and bless our prayers and praises.

Amen.



SUSCEPTIBILITY TO THE VOICE OF GOD.

(C. O. SOLBERG.)

And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3:10.



There is a very beautiful picture, painted by a celebrated artist, of the boy Samuel kneeling in prayer. The attitude of the lad, with all that this has to suggest, brings vividly to our attention certain very important facts and truths as to our own lives.

Of all with which we have to do the religious is the most significant.

The text therefore is calculated to prompt reflection. Our prayer as we turn to it is that the Holy Spirit may direct our thoughts aright in order that we may profit from the Word.

The Fact of God's Unrecognized Presence in Our Lives.

Samuel was faithfully subject to all the service asked of him in and about the Tabernacle. This is shown by his ready response to the voice which he believed to be that of Eli. Thrice he ran at the call. The fourth time he waited reverently, in obedience to instruction, and answered with the words: "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." God was at hand, and in so natural a way, that the voice was like a human voice. His presence was like a human presence.

Gradually Samuel came to understand and appreciate the favor God was showing toward him. It is a blessed leading of the Holy Spirit when we come to a more vivid and immediate sense of the nearness and help of God in our daily lives and

problems. If we are of reverential and responsive heart the eyes of our understandings will be opened, and His grace will become vivid in Word and Sacrament and in our daily worship.

The Advantage of Daily Contact with Holy Things.

Samuel was but an inexperienced boy. Fortunately for him there was Eli, grown gray in the service of God. The old man was able to advise the boy. Life about was evil and people were sinful then as now.

We likewise find much to divert us from the things of God and to discourage our faith. But "Samuel grew up in contact with holy things." The sacred services of God's house the fellowship of God's people, the lessons learned in association with devout people, young and old, helped Samuel very much in his religious life.

The associations about Samuel prompted in him a right spirit. He was obedient, reverent, and immediately responsive. He had an open ear for God's voice. While he did not understand at first, little by little he came to see that God had spoken to him, and that the Lord was near. Whatever God had to say he was willing to hear. This fact is the beginning in him of a long and splendid life, a life of holiness and service.

We say much about service in our day. But service is not of itself enough. It must be holy service, rendered in the fear of God and in the love of His ways. Then we may hope to grow into a consistent Christian practice and character. The way to holiness is by prayer. Without prayer even sacred associations are not enough. It is when we pray and meditate that God gets a chance to speak to us.

Our Life Service is Always Beyond Our Natural Strength.

The response of Samuel to the divine voice was reverent, humble, and submissively willing. The fact was itself a blessing and how far this was in answer to his own and to his mother Hannah's prayer we may never know. Had it not been for this special grace he might have lost the value of the occasion and opportunity. The voice seemed to him a natural human voice, and the presence something actual. The fact that he did not understand at once only deferred and finally clarified and

enforced the impression, so that it became lasting. When later in life doubt assailed him he would thus find double assurance. This fact was important to him, and it is important to us.

We may be apt to feel that Samuel's life was so much bigger than ours can hope to be, and his career so much more significant, that we have less need of such assurance. Samuel became a prophet and a great leader in Israel. But in our own lives there is certain to be much that is beyond human wisdom and strength, and at such times and in such circumstances we will need sure hold upon the help that comes from above.

Especially will we need the grace to submit always with a ready mind to the divine will as soon as we are privileged to know that will. In the hour of trial we shall be happy to possess the confidence of an assured faith.

Amen.

“My gracious Lord, I own Thy right
To every service I can pay,
And call it my supreme delight
To hear Thy dictates and obey.

What is my being but for Thee,
Its sure support, its noblest end;
Thy ever smiling face to see,
And serve the cause of such a Friend.”



SPEAK, O LORD, THY SERVANT HEARETH.

(C. A. DAVIK.)

Rev. 2, 7: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of God's paradise.



Lord give me an open ear and receptive heart for the voice of Thy Spirit!

The Spirit gives to the church of Ephesus the splendid testimony that it had worked and labored with patience and fortitude in the masters cause; that it was jealous of the purity of the life of the individual member and the worthiness of its teachers. It also shared His righteous and holy hatred of the wicked deeds of the Nicolaitanes. According to the standards by which men judge, a truly splendid and enviable testimony.

Nevertheless, the church of Ephesus is, according to the standards of Christ, a fallen church and is urged to repent.

The church had not fallen into the gross and shameful vices of which whole churches have only too often been guilty. But it had fallen from its first love.

There are many and subtle temptations for the Christians, but perhaps there is none so subtle and for which so many Christians fall as the temptation to pass from that blessed relationship of mutual love between God and the individual Christian, to an attitude of stern morality or work righteousness on the part of the Christian.

The Spirit is constantly striving to enrich and deepen our Christian knowledge and experience, that we might become more

and more conscious that we are the objects of Gods loving ministration. But alas, very frequently does our work in the Masters service testify that we are active and zealous principally from a burdening sense of duty, or that we are spurred on by pride of achievement, yea, even by sinful rivalry.

The Spirit would have us all be able to say that the motive power for all our work in the church of God on earth is the love of Christ in us.

That this might be attained He urges us to keep our hearts and minds constantly open to the Word of God, through which the Spirit speaks to us. It kindles the love of God in our hearts and keeps it warm and burning with a steady flame. And in it we shall overcome all obstacles and resist all temptations. Our spiritual life shall be quickened and grow to an ever increasing appreciation of the Word of God as food for the soul and light on the way.

Our service in the Lords work shall be a service of Love and thankfulness to Him who first loved us. That is to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. To commune with Christ daily in His Word. Be nourished and strengthened by Him. And thus to go from strength to strength in His might.

Grant us, O most loving savior, to keep our love to Thee fresh, pure and constant!

Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth,
To Thy word I now give heed;
Life and spirit Thy word beareth,
All Thy word is truth indeed;
Death's dread power in me is rife;
Jesus, may Thy word of life
Fill my soul with love's strong fervor,
That I cling to Thee forever.

Amen

GODFEARING YOUTH.

(M. O. WEE.)

"I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints; but let them not turn again to folly." Psalm 85, 8.



The Lord speaks peace to those who fear Him.

The psalmist declares that He will hearken to the voice of the Lord.

Alas, not *every* one is so wise. For, not only is it *good* to *listen* to what God has to say to us, but it is *absolutely necessary*, if all shall be well with us.

Therefore, *happy* is the man, and especially the youth, who says "Speak, Lord, thy servant will listen!" The Lord's voice should not frighten us; for, He speaks *peace*—peace between Heaven and Earth,—peace for the sake of the blood of Christ, shed for us. His voice is a message of peace, eternal, without end or limits.

"Peace to soothe our bitter woes,
God in Christ on us bestows;
Jesus bought our peace with God
With His holy, precious blood;
Peace in Him for sinners found,
Is the gospel's joyful sound."

God speaks peace to those who fear Him.

Who are they? It is those who have made a "covenant with Him, by sacrifice." Ps. 50: 5. There is, then, a *covenant* established, between them and God, and in accordance with this covenant, they have brought a sacrifice, or offering, to the Lord.

This surely can be applied to us, who by baptism entered into a covenant with God and in that promised to forsake "sin and the devil." *That* was our *only* and *only* offering, in that faith as believing in the triune God and giving ourselves to Him.

In Psalm 32, 6, we read, "For this shall every one that is godly, pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found."

It is the Godfearing ones, then, that pray to God, and it is clear that those who do not pray to Him neither are, nor can be "Godfearing."

Young reader: *do you pray?* Do you feel, in your heart, a need of prayer, and when you pray, do you find joy in so doing?

Remember, those who fear the Lord, pray and sacrifice,—a living sacrifice, offering themselves, their life, —to God.

And to these Godfearing ones, He speaks *peace*. The Lord, God, is He who speaks. "*God*" that is the *almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth*; "*Lord*" that is the God of peace and grace.

It is *good* for the Godfearing to *know* that He who is gracious and kind, is also strong and mighty,—greatly exalted.—"But"—the psalmist goes on, "let them not again turn to folly." Alas, there is danger, then, that this might happen. The Israelites of old, the people of the old covenant, often "turned again to folly." But each time they regretted it bitterly.

It is the same today. Those who turn away from the God of their salvation, prepare their own bitterness.

Dear young friend: *Do not leave the God of your youth!* It is to "turn to folly," to darkness and night, anguish and woe. *Do not go away.*

And if you, in thoughtlessness have left your God, then do as we read in Ps. 32: "*Pray while He may be found,*" and that is *now, today.*

"Spirit of wisdom, turn our eyes
From earth and earthly vanities
To heavenly truth and love;
Spirit of understanding true,
Our souls with heavenly light endue
To seek the things above."

*WHAT DO YOU SEEK?

(K. P. KARLSON.)

If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. Col. 3, 1-2.



The foregoing text is an urgent appeal by the apostle Paul to believers—those who are risen with Christ and born again.

What is He urging them to do? To seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God.

This appeal he is now directing to you, who are reading these words.

You, too, are probably among them that have risen with Christ,—that are born again. God met you in holy baptism. There He gave you a new birth. There you were baptized into Christ and did put on Christ. (Gal. 3, 27.)

But we who were baptized unto Christ, were baptized unto His death. "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. 6, 3-5.) That is why the apostle tells these people: "If ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above."

We are all seeking something. No one finds enough in himself. The children of the world seek the things which are in this world, each according to his own pleasure and desire.

The greedy person searches for earthly riches, the pleasure seekers want to satisfy the desires of the flesh. Those who are ambitious for honor seek to feed their vanity.

But you who are a child of God, you who were raised together with Christ, it is not fitting that you should seek these things.

You must seek the things that are above, where Christ is. Your inclination, your longing should be for the things that are above, not for that which is on earth!

Since there is always a danger for God's children, and especially for the young, of beginning to seek that which belongs to this world, it is important that we take this advice from the apostle to heart, and follow it.

The world entices and draws us away from God. It seems to have so much to offer us that pleases the flesh, but against which the spirit struggles. Therefore it has unfortunately succeeded in drawing so many away from God. They have begun to seek that which is on earth. Their desires are turned to the worldly things, instead of that which is above. That is why Paul complained: Demas left me, because he loved this present world.

What is the value of all that the world has to offer compared with that which God has prepared for us in Christ Jesus? —

Salvation in Christ with its treasures: righteousness, peace and joy. God's kingdom with its riches and gifts which are so great and glorious that no human tongue can describe them. Wherefore the apostle says: *"Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him."* Let us therefore follow this advice: seek the things which are above where Christ is seated on the right hand of God.

Now if you who are reading this should be among those who have been led astray to seek that which is worldly instead of that which is above, then return to your Savior.

Begin to seek God's grace in Jesus and you will not seek in vain, for He has promised: "If ye seek me ye shall find me."

This search will bring you joy in life, peace in death and eternal salvation at home with God.

Let every thought, and work, and word,

To Thee be ever given:

Then life shall be Thy service, Lord,

And death the gate of heaven!

Amen.

SEEK TRUE WISDOM.

(D. KVAASE.)

Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. Eccles. 4, 13.



Here you find encouragement to seek wisdom, while young. But wisdom does not come of itself. To obtain it you must pray, like Salomon: O God, give me wisdom!

But the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To become wise you must fear the Lord, even as Joseph. He has bestowed many blessings upon you, bodily blessings and spiritual. In Christ Jesus He has delivered you from death and accepted you as his child in Holy Baptism. He is your Lord, and Him you must fear. Dread nothing more than to offend Him.

Meditate on His Word and study His ways of guiding men. Then you will obtain wisdom. You will become enabled to investigate and pass an opinion on the different ways of life. And it will be of blessing to yourself and others.

Wisdom is a gift of God, and it is a valuable gift. It is better than honor. It does not matter if you are poor in youth, as long as you are wise. If you are wise, then all these things shall be added unto you. It was so in the case of Solomon. Joseph was poor as a young man. Wisdom, however, was given to him. And behold, God showered blessings upon him, and gave him an honorable position in which he became of blessing to many.

It is of great importance that you seek wisdom, while young. Even this lesson is impressed upon you today. You are re-

mind of the old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished, or as the Hebrew text may be translated: who knoweth not to be admonished.

Many are so intent on seeking honor and riches, that they fail to seek wisdom. They may not be of royal blood, but they seek royal treasures. Sometimes they find them, and they enjoy them. They consider themselves happy. In temporal prosperity they do not feel the want of God's blessings. But they begin to do it in days of sickness and suffering, and, if not before, in old age.

Alas, then they know not to be admonished. While they were young, they did not learn. Now they are too old to learn. Then the evil days come, of which they shall say: I have no pleasure in them. It is therefore a great deal better for you to bear the yoke in your young days and by God's grace lay a good foundation for your future life.

You may think: This is an absurd saying; who can hear it? You reason: In youth we should be entitled to enjoy the pleasures of life. I don't like these longfaced Job's comforters that always remind of sin and death.

But friend do not reason thus. If you receive the wisdom of God, you will realize that the spirit of Christianity is not dark and dreary. It does not exclude the joyful spirit of youth. No, but sin and folly it will banish from your life. Therefore, take to heart the words of the wise man. He knows by experience what he is speaking of, and his words are given by inspiration of God: Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. May we seek the wisdom of God for Christ's sake!

Thou hast promised to receive us,
Poor and sinful though we be;
Thou hast mercy to relieve us,
Grace to cleanse, and power to free;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Let us early turn to Thee.

Early let us seek Thy favor,
Early let us do Thy will,
Blessed Lord and only Savior,
With Thy love our bosoms fill;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast loved us, love us still.

Amen.

WISE UNTO SALVATION.

(ORLANDO INGOLDSTAD.)

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 3:15.



*Blessed is the man who has known
the Sacred Writings from childhood!*

What pleasant memories sweep in over the soul of the man who, since his childhood days, has known his God. The words of Solomon have been realized in such a man's life. His training is bearing fruit. Over and over again he repeats the words of wisdom: "Train up a child in

the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it."

It is natural for a child to have a child's affection for parents, and yet not all children honor their parents. But for such a one as Timothy of whom our text speaks, there is experienced no difficulty in this respect. Because of Scriptural instruction, he loved, he honored, he obeyed.

How great an advantage is forever enjoyed by the boy or girl who had godly parents and received early instruction in godliness of life and conduct.

What *pleasant experiences* from scriptural promises realized belong to those who have heeded the call of God and meditated on His Word day and night.

There are many people stumbling through a useless haphazard life who do not enjoy the promises of God. In the first place they do not know the heart-promises and in the second place

they do not trust even the hastily read promises. How we all ought to memorize from the storehouse of God's rich promises, so that a telling Godly influence might make itself felt more deeply in our lives. How secure is not the man who has built securely upon God's heart-promises and their complete fulfillment in his life.

The experience of salvation overwhelms us when we confess our sins unto God and appropriate unto ourselves the promise verses which convey pardon for our souls. Then follows the great inflow of the liquid love of God that melts our hearts into an endless song of praise and adoration of God.

Oh, what joy is ours in such an hour when the flood-gates of this heavenly experience is ours and the promise of salvation is partially appreciated and joyfully received.

See from his head, his hands, his feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.

What a *living faith* is found in the heart of man who has known the Scriptures from his earliest childhood. He does not question. He does not only reason. He accepts because he loves. And he loves because God first loved him.

This living faith is an expressive faith revealed. You cannot conceal your faith anymore than you can hide your face. Only hold-up men or the makers of night revelries desire to conceal their identity. A child of God must have a working faith. Paul speaks very beautifully in his first letter to the Thessalonians of their "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

If your faith is dead you are living a life of Christ-abandonment and you ought to awaken from spiritual sleep. Do not say you have faith and then serve the devil because it is convenient, or because it might be conducive to good business.

Your faith ought to multiply itself in your contact with others. Have you a living, labouring faith in God?

What a Christ! What a Jesus! All that is profitable centers in and around Christ Jesus. The scriptures point to Him as the center and heart of all Inspiration, Prophecy, Teaching and Enlightenment.

All of what has been said in the foregoing is made possible because Christ is the same today, yesterday and forever. He came, He taught, He lived, He died. And where can you match His matchless beauty? How will you measure His teaching? Where will a better example for living and dying be found?

But all this matters not if He remains dead to you.

He rose again. He lives to intercede for His own.

Everything depends on your attitude towards Him. If you are a child of God, thank the Christ! If you were a child and then wandered, won't you return?

Or don't you know Him?

Have you never heard?

Then away to the House of Salvation to hear the Word. Into the Book to discern the mysteries thereof. And the result of your hearing and your searching will be rewarded for He promises "seek and ye shall find."

Oh, God give to us many Timothys and raise up many a Saul and make them Pauls, in Jesus' name.

Were the whole realm of nature mine

That were a tribute far too small

Love so amazing, so divine

Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Amen.

A GRAND BUILDING.

(G. A. BRANDELLE.)

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Jude 20, 21.



The epistle of Jude, consisting of but one chapter, is written to believers, to such as had come into the love of God through repentance and faith. *Their greatest concern should be to maintain themselves in the love of God, in the love that God had to them.*

Those who have not as yet entered into spiritual communion with the Lord, imagine that the greatest difficulty of all is that of being brought to the Lord. Once His through faith, the battle is won, and there is naught more to fear.

These people never stop to consider that the best of friends sometimes fall out with each other and lose their friendship the one for the other.

Precisely the same thing occurs, time and again, between the Lord and many of those who have given themselves to Him; their love to the world warms up again and their love to their Lord grows correspondingly cold, and ere they are aware of it, they have fallen out of the love of God.

How can a catastrophe like that be prevented?

Only by "building up yourselves on your most holy faith."

And what does that imply?

This alone, that Christ is the only foundation upon which we can build our hope of salvation. There is not anything aside from Him that we can turn to and which can save us. If we

drop Him, we have lost every hope of salvation. The greatest amount of money, influence, morality, service and self-righteousness count for nothing in this connection.

Building upon Christ is effected through many contritions and repentance together with faith in the promises of Christ. The believer who knows nothing of this, is lacking in contrition and prayer. The watchful one, on the other hand, knows his failures and sins, they are a constant worry to him. They disturb his harmonious relation to his God. His one and only thought is how to get rid of them.

He desires that his relation to his God be ever clear, distinct and pleasant. To Him would He also devote his strength and service. One cannot be a builder upon Christ and neglect to support His Kingdom to the best of one's ability.

In addition to "building up yourselves on your most holy faith," we have also "praying in the Holy Spirit."

The follower of Christ has a dependable guide, it is the Holy Spirit. This Spirit wills what God wills. When He enters the heart of the believer, the latter wills what God wills. In this state the prayers of the believer are not of the flesh but look only to the good of self. His prayers run: "Thy will be done." Thus has he sweet and strong communion with God, he is delivered from love of material things, his knowledge of the laws of salvation grows ever more complete, and he becomes firmly established in the faith.

As such he nevertheless "looks for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." He knows that only through the mercy of the Lord is he to attain unto eternal life. His own righteousness is ever to him as filthy rags but he knows that the mercy of the Lord is ever nigh unto all that call upon Him. The mercy of God is his only plea for the life to come.

His promise bears our spirits up,
While we expect that blessed hope,
The bright appearance of the Lord,
And faith stands leaning on His Word.

Amen.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HERITAGE.

(G. T. GULLIXSON.)

I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself; that the Lord may continue His word, which He spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. 1 Kings 2, 2-4.



Many of us know a great many things our fathers never had a chance to learn. Schools and colleges are for us; for them was but small opportunity for education and long days for toil. But let us not deceive ourselves:

*"Knowledge and wisdom, far from
being one,
Have oft-times no connection."*

There is wisdom that comes with ripeness of years. And if youth could add, to the knowledge and enthusiasm of youth, this wisdom, what achievement would there not be?

But even the wisdom of the aged is folly if he has forgotten or ignored the truth of God Eternal.

But we may safely lay our academic caps at cottage doors to learn, from ripened Christian characters, how to live.

David dying, instructs youthful Solomon and inspired wisdom is passed from generation to generation.

There is wisdom in remembering God's faithfulness from

generation to generation. It steadies one in trials and lifts up the soul out of gloom.

Joshua in his valedictory said: "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God speak concerning you; all are come to pass unto you." The help of God hitherto is a prophecy for the future.

There is wisdom in remembering that 'we go the way of all the earth'. A mighty caravan winds up through the years. Each night fresh graves are by the wayside. It startles one to remember that we are going day by day toward our own, but it should steady one to remember.

If David himself had never forgotten 'I'm even now going the way of all flesh', would not many a step in his life have been different?

And if Solomon in the midst of his palaces had remembered it, there would have been a brighter ending to his biography.

A wise child that, who suddenly with the words "If I should die before I wake" unfinished upon his lips, leaped out of bed and down stairs to undo some meanness toward a sleeping baby-brother. "'If I should die before I wake' I'd hate to have him come down in the morning and find his tin soldiers standing on their heads."

How will the works of your hands appear by the light of that morning when you are not among those that wake?

There is wisdom in urging purposeful manliness upon ourselves and others. "Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man."

The highest type of manliness is godliness.

"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Don't be deceived. Braggart attitudes and full-mouthed oaths do not bespeak the man. When Pilate pointed and said, "Behold the man," he was pointing at the Son of God, but also at God's ideal of what mankind should be.

We were created for holiness. Shall we now dare presume that these frames of ours are intended to be ruled by the down

dragging influence of sin? 'Twice born men,' men renewed after the image of the Creator are advancing in true manliness, and through life's work days and holidays the wisdom thereof will prove itself.

There is wisdom in passing on from your generation to the next the precepts and promises of God. Here the dying father sees for his son. A prosperous present and a glorious future, but only in the way of obedience to God's statutes and testimonies.

The precepts of God are eternal and changeless. His promises likewise; but for us they are wonderfully expanded and we may see what prophets and kings in vain desired to see.

There is nothing in our generation so worthy of being passed on to the next as Christian truth. There is no wisdom like unto it. A few great souls have spoken noble words with their latest breath, and their words live on.

We may not be able to impress with our phrases of farewell, but today and tomorrow we can speak and live the truth as it is in Jesus! and go on assured that our being here was not in vain.

The torches of eternal light and life are in our hands. Let us live in their light and dying hand them on!

O may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight;
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light!

Amen.



DEPRIVING A MAN OF HIS GODGIVEN STRENGTH.

(K. B. VAALER.)

Judges 16, 17: "And he told her all his heart, and said unto her, there hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."



God had singularly blessed Samson. He had been given a special gift which God desired should be used for the deliverance of Israel from their enemies. This gift, his great physical strength, Samson did also use on several occasions for the purpose for which it had been given him. He struck terror into the hearts of the Philistines.

Just so long as he in the use of this gift was guided by that Spirit of God which had been given him to qualify for this blessing did this gift prove a blessing to himself and also to the children of Israel.

But Samson fell into evil ways. The gift which he had received, proved to be, under his own guidance and control, a snare to him. And so apparently forgetting his Nazarite vow and his divine call to be the liberator of God's people he fell into that temptation where God forsook him and left him to himself.

We too, dear young reader, have received from God some blessing, some gift which He desires us to use in such a way that He may receive the glory that is His just due. And that we may come into possession of temporal as well as eternal happiness.

Also in the measure that we ask for and receive the Spirit of God to qualify for those blessings will they serve the purpose for which they have been given.

On the other hand we shall find that while God may not remove His blessings from us, they will become a snare and a curse to us instead of a blessing. When we for instance set at naught the guiding voice of God's Spirit. And when we permit ourselves in the use of them to be governed by our own evil inclinations and **perverted will**.

We desire, as Christians, not only to possess these blessings, but we desire also that they continue to be such to us, and, therefore, we may ask, how is that done?

Firstly, let us ever be mindful of our Christian profession; our vows to the Lord. We too, have made the vow that we will renounce the devil, all his works and ways in whatever form they may appear, and to fear, love and trust in God above all things.

Secondly, when we are tempted let us not trust in ourselves and think that we with our own strength can cope with the temptations that beset our path. If we do we shall find, that our boasted strength will prove to be our weakness.

Thirdly, a constant use of prayer to God for His strength and wisdom, and for a copious measure of His spirit so that we may truly qualify for all His blessings.

If we will but do this we can be assured of true happiness here in this life and of the eternal bliss in the life hereafter.

Let us then, daily ask Him to forgive us all our sins and to grant us His Spirit's aid that we may keep ourselves pure within and unspotted from the world.

“O watch and pray, my soul the way
Of safety lies before thee,
Lest thou shouldst be led astray,
And the foe come o'er thee.”

“Be on your guard, keep watch and word,
Beware of Satan's cunning!
Watch and pray and trust your Lord
Till ye see Him coming!”

Amen.

DO NOT CONSENT.

(H. P. GRIMSBY.)

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Prov. 1, 10.



It is a father's deep concern for the happiness of his beloved child that is expressed in this warning.

Yes, it is our heavenly Father who thus counsels us young people. We are His sons and daughters, born again into a living fellowship with Him in Baptism. He has purchased us with the blood of His Son. He deals with us in fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, and wishes us everything good for body and soul, for time and eternity. And because of His love and concern for us, He warns us against the many temptations that would lead us away from Him and into sin and disgrace.

What does He mean by these sinners who entice us?

By sinners here are meant all those who are not His children. They have never been brought into living communion with Him, or they have permitted themselves to be led astray from Him again. They have permitted themselves to be blinded by the god of this world. Like the prodigal son, they believe that a life separated from God brings the greatest joy and blessing. Many of our friends, companions and relatives may be found in this company of sinners.

What evil influence do these sinners exert on God's children?

They entice us in so many ways to think and speak and act as they do. Perhaps our best friends warn us against taking life too seriously.

We are young, and must feel and act like young people. We must not withdraw from the enjoyments of our companions. Young people must be ambitious, seek pleasure, honor, fellowship, riches. If one shall become anything in this world, he must be willing to accommodate himself to the ways and means of other people. Other friends or acquaintances may openly ridicule us because we desire to lead a true Christian life, and tempt us, as Peter was tempted, to deny our Lord and Savior.

When sinners entice or ridicule, what shall we do?

When friends entice you to go with them on the Sabbath day instead of going to church, have you the courage to reply: "Know you not that I must be in my Father's house?" When sinners entice you to go with them to sinful amusements, like dancing, visiting questionable places, or indecent movies and the like, do you consent?

Dancing is considered innocent amusement by most people, and still there is no amusement that leads so many young men and women into sin and disgrace as the modern dance.

Have you the courage to say that you cannot take part in any amusement where you cannot take your Savior with you?

Do you as a young woman ever accept an invitation from a stranger or a man with a bad reputation to go joy riding?

O, how many young women will have to regret all their days that they accepted just one such invitation! When sinners invite you, a young man, to become partner in a questionable adventure or some dishonest business have you the courage to deny yourself, and remain true to your Lord?

How can we resist temptation?

Let us always bear in mind whose sons and daughters we are. Children of such a Father as we have cannot afford to let themselves be deceived by sinners. When sinners entice let us answer courageously as Joseph did: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God."

In the next place let us remember that the pleasures of sin are so transient, their aftertaste is a bad conscience, and their end, serious injury to body and soul. The wages of sin is death.

Every time we yield to temptation, something good dies in us. But every time we resist temptation the good in us is strengthened and our conscience feels refreshed and contented.

When the prodigal son yielded to temptation, how did he fare?

He did not find what he was promised, but lost all the good that he possessed. Does any one believe that he left his father's house the second time?

And think what Joseph gained by running away from the enticing sinner. Temporary humiliation, that is true. But God was with him, and exalted him in due season to become prime minister of all Egypt.

Finally the Lord has given us the great privilege of prayer and the use of His Word and the Sacrament of the Altar as effective means to resist temptation. If we use these means we have the assurance that we shall in the end overcome and hold the victory. *"I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me."*

Call me away from flesh and sense;
Thy sovereign Word can draw me thence:
I would obey the Voice divine,
And all inferior joys resign.

Amen.



HALTING BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS.

(L. E. KLEPPE.)

How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. 1 Kings 18: 21.



Israel had turned away from the true God. They worshipped idols. How sad that the people of God had forsaken him! They thought it would be possible to worship both the true God and idols. When the prophet of the Lord noticed this, it appeared to him like a person being halt on both feet.

There is something ailing. The prophet gives them the reasonable advice: to take a firm stand.

Is it well to have fellowship with God? Then follow him faithfully.

Is the idol a better God? Follow him.

It was of great importance for these people to wake up and see how impossible it is to divide their heart between God and the idols.

The people of God in our times are severely tempted to divide their hearts between God and the world.

The children of the world are trying to threaten and entice the children of God to follow them in their sinful pleasures. Would it hurt if I take part with them a little while? *That is not going to make me give up God or the church. Then I would not need to part with my friends. I can do my work in the church as before. This looks reasonable.*

To have fellowship with the children of God and the children of the world may make a person popular with the world, but he

will suffer spiritually. He becomes halt. God cannot use people who halt in His service, unless He is permitted to heal them. The Lord must first give them the true vision of life and courage and power to take a firm stand for God and His cause in the world.

We have sympathy with old, crippled people halting on the way. But it is still worse to see the young men and women halting on the way.

We like to see the young people strong and full of life, able to do their duty both in state and in church, wherever it is.

Would you like to be such a youth?

If so, then you can not divide your heart between God and the world.

Do you remain in covenant with God?

Then ask Him for His aid to remain faithful. Use the means of grace. They give you strength. Be by the grace of God obedient to the Holy Spirit. You can not be on the Lord's side without His aid. These gifts of the Holy Spirit will only be given to those who obey. Acts 5, 32.

Or are you among those, who have turned away from God?

Then let me ask you from your God: *How long will you halt between two opinions?* It hurts you to halt. You are hurting others by your example, you are ungrateful to God who has been so kind to you.

Your faithful Savior who has died for you is waiting for you to follow him. Harken to the voice of the Holy Spirit in his word.

O, repent and return to the Lord. He will accept you and forgive all your sins. He will give you strength to follow Him.

God, may our young people be happy for time and eternity!

“My God, accept my heart this day,
And make it always Thine,
That I from Thee no more may stray,
No more from Thee decline.”

Amen.

*FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD.

(H. C. HOLM.)

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. James 4, 4.



My dear young friend! God or the world. One of the two. Either one or the other. Here is no connection.

No one can serve two masters. Many are making the attempt. None are able. If you love God and adore Him, you can not possibly find any pleasure in the sinful ways of the world.

If your pleasure is in this world, you have no joy in God. Take a serious selfexamination on your condition with God. If you love God, His Word and His people, you will have the world against you. If you love the world, God is against you.

"Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Nor let it be forgotten that the world with its joys passes away, but he who does the will of God abideth forever.

"Let me know to which company you belong and I will tell you what you are."

Never attempt to divide your heart between God and the world. The world in your heart and God in your mouth. That is an unfortunate characteristic of today more prevalent than ever. There is much confession, but weak living.

No, take your position! God will give you courage and strength. Do not limp to both sides. "If the Jehovah be God, follow Him."

It is gratifying to see older people, who no longer have any special desire to partake in the sinful pleasures of the world, keeping themselves near to God.

But we like to see a young man or woman in the springtime of life, to whom the world seems bright, gay and alluring, receiving grace, courage and strength to choose, like Moses did, rather to suffer wrong with the children of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Esteeming Christ's disgrace of greater value than all the glory and honor of the world. That is the truth, something very great and wonderful.

God bless you young friend! Keep close to God. Pray much. Read God's Word. Come regularly to the House of God. "But flee youthful lusts and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

And if some of you who read these lines have had similar experiences, such as I unfortunately have had, then seek the Lord while He is found and call upon Him while He is near. *It may soon be too late.*

I am an older man, but must sorrowfully admit, that I lost connection with God, while young.

My soul was carnal, blind, and bound
By sin, and never sought Thee,
Lord Jesus, though I ever found
All else no comfort brought me,
No peace, no rest
Within my breast;
My troubled soul remained unblest,
Of Thee I ne'r bethought me.

But thanks be to God. The swine's food in the far off land could no longer satisfy. The thought of the Father's open bosom, and that dear Father's house, overpowered me. "Farewell, comrades, you will see me no more!" I came home, and became—a child once more.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea, and forever." Take courage my dear young friend! Come home! Heaven is watching and waiting for you!

The Lord guide you! The Lord keep you! *The Lord preserve you in the Word and grant you steadfastness in your faith unto the end.*

Come, brothers, wander on with joy,
For shorter grows the way,
The hour that frees us from the flesh
Draws nearer day by day.
A little truth and love
A little courage yet.
More free from earth, more apt to set
Your hopes on things above.

Amen.



GUILLESS SOULS.

(S. P. LONG.)

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 1 John, 47.



Deception is always devilish, but never divine.

Nathanael was a true Israelite. As such he loved God's Word.

When Jesus of Nazareth found Philip He found a Bible student; when Philip found Nathanael he also found a Bible student; but when Nathanael found Jesus, he found "Him of whom Moses in the law and prophets did write."

"A true Israelite loves God's Word. A true Israelite will ask questions. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

It is not wrong to ask honest questions. An honest question deserves an honest answer. "*Come and see!*" said Philip.

A true Israelite will investigate.

Nathanael did not wait for Jesus to come to him. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him. "Oh, that Jesus could see us all coming to Him now!"

A true Israelite is worth mentioning to others. Jesus said of him, not to him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." A wonderful man! A rare man! No deception in him! Honest Nathanael!

Jesus assured him that He saw him before Philip called him "under the fig tree."

That was enough. Jesus found Philip, Philip found Nathanael and Nathanael thought he found Jesus, but now discovers that Jesus had found him, too.

It is enough to convince any honest man, and so he confesses, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God: Thou art the King of Israel."

It is the old, old story. The saved serve God, proclaim His Word and call sinners to come to Jesus and see for themselves.

They, however, discover that Jesus saw them first and came to save them.

Let us take a moment for:

SELF-EXAMINATION.

Have I the right conception of Jesus Christ?

In the days of Matthew, Mark and Luke, it was necessary to show that He was the promised Messiah, that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He did become incarnate, that He was "The Little Lord Jesus Asleep on the Hay," that He was the Son of Man as He claimed for Himself.

But, by the time John was writing, the littleness of Jesus was so emphasized that it became necessary to say: "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." 1, 3.

Do I realize that Jesus is the Word that created the worlds?

It was the great Son of God who created the worlds and who plays with them on the ends of His fingers. It was He whom Nathanael heard say: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Am I coming to Jesus as I should?

Do I realize that there is no other way to the Father?

Do I always pray in His name?

Do I refuse to go where my Lord is not wanted?

When I go to the House of God, do I go there to meet Jesus?

Do I look for Him in the sermon and in the Bible when I read it? Do I start the day and the week going to Jesus?

And, finally, am I trying to deceive anyone? Am I honest with my family, my neighbor, my friends, my enemies?

Am I hiding anything that should be known?

Am I going to the closet and shutting my door and telling my Father in Jesus' name all that is in my heart to get the open reward?

Do those who know me best know that I am genuine and a true follower of Jesus Christ?

God, let there be no guile in me.

The following stanza was found scratched on the wall of a prison cell by a prisoner whom Jesus had found:

“Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made,
And every stalk on earth a quill,
To write the love of God to man
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
If stretched from sky to sky.”

Amen.



THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST.

(J. WARGELIN.)

“And it came to pass, when He had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” 1 Sam. 18: 1.



Of the many beautiful examples of friendship in the Bible none is more elevating and touching in its simplicity than the friendship of David and Jonathan.

David was one of those humble youths who had grown up in simple but clean surroundings of country life. He had breathed the pure air of Judean hills and had become a manly youth. His manliness was made ideal by his deep devotional spirit.

Jonathan on the other hand, had grown up amidst very different circumstances. He was a prince and had been reared in a palace. But his heart was awake to virtue and truth. When he came to know David, who in the strength of God had slain Goliath, his heart was attached to him and a deep, noble friendship grew up between them. Their hearts were knit together and only death was able to separate them.

This beautiful picture of friendship shines forever from the pages of the Old Testament and is a fitting illustration of the friendship of Him, whose love for us is still greater. Let us speak briefly of

The Friendship of Christ.

We shall divide it under the following headings:

Its Value.

Its necessity.

Its acceptance.

Its blessing.

Let us notice first *the value of the friendship of Christ*. If you were invited to visit the president of the United States you would consider it a very great honor. But when you are invited to be a friend of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the living and the dead, how much more honorable is His friendship!

What is an earthly ruler compared with the ruler of Heaven and Earth! An earthly ruler can show one favor, indeed, and give one many costly gifts, but he cannot give one forgiveness of sins, the peace and joy in the Holy Ghost and eternal life.

These are the gifts which Jesus has prepared and secured for us through His sacrificial death as a Lamb of God. "I lay down my life for the sheep," testifies Jesus of His death.

And St. Paul makes a confession that the "Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). The eternal life itself is gained only through knowledge of Jesus. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (Joh. 17: 3). "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Joh. 3: 18).

My young friend, do you not consider His friendship valuable?

Our need of this friendship. The next question is, who needs this friendship? You will answer, perhaps, according to the catechetical teaching that you have received, that all men are conceived and born in sin and need the forgiveness for sins through Christ before they are saved.

This is dogmatically correct, but have you experienced the need of Jesus as Savior in your own life? Do you realize that without the friendship of Christ you will perish?

The time of youth is deceptive. Its tendency is to look upon this life as very certain and to forget the life to come. "So many years are ahead of me yet, it is not so important to consider the religious matters very seriously now." Thus reasons the natural mind. Allow me to ask you, whom have we to love in this world that we should overlook the friendship of Christ? And if He is our Saviour ought we not to sanctify the springtime of our life to His service?

In the religious experience of many young people the confident, personal attitude towards God which sees in Him a loving Heavenly Father is lacking. We do not mean that they are irreligious or neglectful of the divine services. *But their relation to God is general and vague and they have not experienced that "God is love."* They are fearful of Him when drawing nigh to His presence. *Their worship is from duty and lacks the joyous spirit characteristic of one who has living faith in Jesus.*

And this is not true of the young only, but many older church members are in the same state of religious experience. Is this your experience too, my reader? If so, then hearken to the appealing words of Christ, as He speaks in the third chapter of Revelation, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." You will then appreciate His friendship and say with Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." How blessed to be able to sing:

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pains we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Amen.

II. THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST.

(J. WARGELIN.)

Jesus Christ being our friend is ready and anxious to have us bring all things to Him. Blessed is the invitation and also the assurance: "Come unto me" and "I shall in no wise cast thee out."

Are we weak and heavy laden,
 Cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Savior, still our refuge:
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer!
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
 Thou wilt find a solace there.

How may a sinner attain this assurance of salvation and receive the forgiveness of his sins?

God's Word gives us the answer. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (Joh. 14: 1), says Jesus. And Paul answered the jailer at Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

We need the faith.

Faith is the hand which receives the grace of God in Jesus. There are two sides to it.

First, the sinner must be willing to accept forgiveness. When God enlightens him so that he sees his own misery and spiritual poverty, he longs for the righteousness of God. He can not be satisfied to remain in this unhappy state. The sinner believes and God works in him through regeneration and fills his heart with peace and joy. How this happens we can not explain. The fact of regeneration is as unexplainable now as when Jesus spoke of it to Nikodemus. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh,

and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." But the working of the Holy Spirit is known in a believing heart. Instead of the fear, the wrath of God, one now enjoys the blessed joy of forgiveness.

Many people never experience the work of regeneration in their hearts for there is always connected with it the breaking of something in our being, and they resist this. That which breaks, may break, for it is the selfish will in us, and in place of it God's power begins to reign in the heart. Man is made whole. My sincere wish and prayer is that every one of you, my readers may become a friend of Christ through the act of regeneration and that you may experience it.

The blessing of the friendship of Jesus. The friendship of Jesus means a new life to the believer. He no longer lives to satisfy his own natural ambitions and selfish will. God's will has become the supreme law of his life. He does not live in slavish fear of it, but he loves it from choice, because he knows it is good. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Christian life appears gloomy and devoid of joy to the unconverted, but it is filled with inner joy and peace. The storms and restlessness of life may make themselves felt on the surface but deep in the believing heart there reigns the peace of God, which the world can not take away.

Life with Christ is trusting in Him in all conditions of life. "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; He that keepeth thee will not slumber. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Ps. 121: 3, 8). This friend will walk with us through life at our side and His love shall not fail us even in death.

My friend, is your soul knit with the soul of Christ? Is He your friend?

The human soul longs for God, its Creator. "Thou, God, hast created us unto Thee, and restless are our hearts until they rest in Thee." We could not come to God, so He came to us in

the life of Jesus Christ. Through His atoning death the way to heaven has been opened to every believing heart. Jesus has become our friend. He has gone back to His Father to prepare us a dwelling place there. "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Yes, keeping steadfast to the friendship of Jesus, we too shall arrive there.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Amen.



YOUNG BURNING HEARTS.

(DANIEL HALVORSEN.)

And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures? Luke 24: 32.



Two disciples were on the way to Emmaus. They had lost their faithful friend and brother, Jesus of Nazareth. Doubt and anxiety had taken possession of their heart. They struggled with problems of immeasurable importance. Questions that seemed unanswerable. The dark cloud of doubt appeared to hide the light of hope for the future.

What would become of them now when the Master had been taken away from their midst?

As they thus contemplated, this question was answered by Jesus Himself who came and walked with them on the way. — *"Did not our heart burn within us—while he opened to us the scriptures?"*

Young friend, here is the secret of life's happiness and success. Jesus with us on life's journey. How many a young life has not been wasted and lost, because they neglected to take Jesus along. They forgot to let Jesus "open to them the scriptures."

Do we in vain seek the way to success and happiness in things of worldly nature, and reject the only one who can bring light into a hopeless existence?

There are many in the world who endeavor to play upon the heart strings of your life. But it is not music—only disharmony. Jesus, and Jesus only, can tune your life, and then, yea, then

only is produced harmonious music that lifts the soul and heart toward God, and your life is filled with peace and joy.

Without Jesus life is full of unrest; full of puzzling and perplexing problems that eventually may lead to despair. Jesus alone can help. This Jesus we find in the Word.

Words of great men in the world may have moved you to decision and action. They may have inspired you to high and noble motives and an ideal goal.

But when the Lord is permitted to "open to you the scriptures."—When you hear and meditate upon the Word of God—Love to Jesus is kindled in your heart. And you will experience the same as did the disciples on the way to Emmaus, namely the desire for a constant companionship with Jesus. "They constrained Him, saying, abide with us!"

These two disciples doubted that Jesus really was the Messiah. This their doubt drew forth rebuke, when the Master said: "O, fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." They knew not of the glorious resurrection on Easter morning. But the doubt vanished as soon as Jesus had opened the scriptures to them.

Perhaps you, too, struggle with doubt; you wonder if Jesus really was the Christ of whom the prophets wrote. You question whether there is any truth in the claim that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. You seem to discover so many things that are hazy in the pages of the Bible. How is it possible, you say, to comprehend anything which is contrary to reason and accept it unqualifiedly as the Word of God?

Remember, the doubting disciples were convinced against their reason. Thus will Jesus also convince you of the truth of scriptures, if you will let Him speak to you. This He does in the Bible.

Let the Bible become dear to you. May you in it find your spiritual nourishment. Your eyes will be opened so that you may see and realize the great treasure in the Word, when Jesus reveals himself to you an exalted, all-powerful, and glorious One. As the One who can solve all life's secret problems. As the One who gives man something worth while,— something for which

to live. As the One who lights the Light of Hope in your existence.
As the One who makes life bright. As the One who gives success
and happiness. And as the One who sows in your life the seed
that will sprout and bloom in eternal youth.

Divine Instructor, gracious Lord!
Be Thou forever near;
Teach me to love Thy sacred word,
And view my Savior there.

Amen.



JESUS THE BEST HOME MAKER.

(J. SKAGEN.)

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. John 2, 1-2.

Lord Jesus, be Thou present at the earthly marriage feasts with Thy sanctification and grace. Amen.



Marriage is a divine institution, sanctified by God and has rich promises for His blessings. But even here do we find that sin has penetrated and left its insignia; wherefore so many unhappy marriages.

As the devil disturbed the love, joy and fidelity of the first couple, so does he also in our day, try with all his satanic power, to overthrow all which binds man and woman in the sacred institution of matrimony. Yea, even the institution itself. As an example, I mention the thousands of divorces yearly obtained which bring unhappiness into so many homes, yea, corrupting humanity as a whole.

But, there is a remedy for this calamity. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by His death won all victory over sin and devil and is ever ready to shield and protect the sacred institution from the power and efforts of the devil.

Youth is designated as "the-Springtime of Life." Each day brings it nearer "Life's summer," which, for most, leads to the threshold of marriage. A very important step in life. Many have realized the importance of that step too late. Too many a young couple, yea, even elder ones, must with pangs of sorrow,

realize that their choice should have been governed by the kindly and loving advice of father and mother.

But they would not reason. — Entreatingly and admonishingly did father and mother say — “Marry not into other denominations; it will only bring unhappiness and discord into your home. — He drinks, therefore you will experience hell upon earth. — The dancehall and other sinful enjoyments is all he seeks. — Oh do not marry him.”

But the answer to all these entreaties was an assurance that when the marriage ties were tied, all would be well. — The wedding day was set, but, secretly. Not agreeing upon as to what pastor should perform the marriage ceremony, they resorted to a civil official. Denying themselves the blessing of the church, which is equivalent with God’s blessing. — Without a Word of God, following them upon the path of Life, from which learning, a admonition and comfort could be derived.

Their first child was born. — Another obstacle. — Who should baptize their child? — Hereupon they could not agree and the consequence was that they denied their child the right to become a member of the church of God and through it an heir to eternal life. — The desire for the glass increased rather than diminished, and all attempts and admonitions to refrain from its dreadful usage, was met with harsh words and ill treatment. — They could not agree as to which church they should attend, consequently they lived a life without the blessings of the church.

The awful awakening! — Had I only listened to the earnest prayers of Mother and the loving counsel of Father: but, alas, it is all too late!

Dear young friend! Remember, “our elders are the oldest.” They have experienced the school of life. As Christian parents, their main desire is the children’s happiness. Their child’s comfort and joy, is also theirs; their child’s sorrow and unhappiness reflects also upon them.

Among the guests at the wedding in Cana, was the mother of Jesus, Jesus and His disciples. The presence of Jesus at this wedding brought joy and blessing. — The wine had all been used which caused anxiety, but Jesus alleviates this anxiety by

transforming water into wine. And today also He can turn sorrow into joy, want into abundance, bondage into freedom, and a sinful life into a holy fellowship with God.

Young friend! When you are about to take this important step in life, invite Jesus.

Begin your married life with Him as your life's light and joy and rest assured that your wedded life will be a foretaste of the spiritual union with the heavenly bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus, be Thou my home's joy and happiness; hinder all mortal and spiritual sorrow and eventually lead me into the heavenly weddingfeast.

O Lord, we come before Thy face;
In every home bestow Thy grace
On children, father, mother;
Relieve their wants, their burdens ease,
Let them together dwell in peace
And love to one another!

Amen.



PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE.

(L. J. FLOREN.)

Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in Thy sight, O King, and if it please the King, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. Esther 7, 3.



Prayer and pardon are closely connected. Without prayer no pardon, without the need of pardon no prayer.

The plea for pardon is marked with great earnestness. The queen Esther pleading for her own life and that of her people is typical of this.

It seemed like everything depended on her prayer. If she failed to move the heart of the king she was undone, and her people doomed to destruction. If she found favor in his sight all was well.

The greatest conflicts in life are the spiritual conflicts.

There is no sorrow like unto the sorrow of a soul in distress.

In such moments the unseen things become a reality. Sin is no longer a theory, but a certainty. Its terrible power is painfully felt, its dire consequences clearly perceived.

Just retribution must follow. The door of hope seems doubly locked. The terror of eternal death seizes the soul. There is no way of escape.

Every human agency for help fails, but with the Lord there is escape from death.

Christ is the king of life.

To Him the soul flees for refuge. He is a Lord plenteous in redemption. Has he not said: "Come unto me," and, "call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee."

Thus the sinner is encouraged to draw near unto God. The soul is full of anxiety, but the danger is impending. And thus the timid and faint heart is spurred on to heroic efforts.

The suppliant approaches the throne of grace. He pleads for favor in the sight of God. The soul surrenders all to God.

The case rests with the Lord of life.

Will He cast off forever, or will He be merciful?

The prostrate form, the heavy sighs, the prayerful mien, the tearful eyes, the contrite heart, the spirit without guide are pleas which the Lord will not reject.

Never was the soul more despicable in its own eyes, never more beautiful in the sight of God.

The King grants mercy and life. The snare of the fowler is broken, the captive is free. Sadness and sorrow flee, and songs of deliverance spring from the soul.

Such a sublime and spiritual experience will never be forgotten. From henceforth the great Deliverer is the one whom the soul loveth. Neither the world, nor the things that are in the world can satisfy.

Christ is the king of the soul. Love to Him constrains to a holy life, to consecrated service.

To please Him is to the true Christians the constant aim.

This is in direct opposition to the views of the world.

The world loves its own. Conform to its standards and you are acceptable, choose to differ and your name is rejected.

Faith in a living and just God is in itself objectionable to many. And a holy life is a silent accuser of evil-doers.

Persecution is the inevitable result.

The affliction of the just form many sad chapters in sacred history. We see the innocent writhing in agony, and we know that the saints of God suffer shamefully at the hands of sinners.

Think it not strange, Christian soul, if affliction falls to your lot.

Your Savior was a man of sorrows.

As He was so are you in this world. Consider it rather an honor to be permitted to suffer for His name's sake.

The Lord will keep His own. That is His sure promise. He

will strengthen and help you. He will cause you to stand, bless you in your troubles, and sanctify your deepest distress. *Wonderful are the ways of the Lord!*

The pardoned soul is not satisfied with the joy of his own salvation. His heart is enlarged. The Christian love longs to reach every human being.

The plight of many of our brethren according to the flesh is pitiful.

The enemy has plotted for their destruction. Thousands upon thousands are in danger of eternal death. Whether they be far away, or near by, they are all created for the same lofty purpose.

Shall they perish?

God forbid! It must never take place! No effort must be spared, no sacrifice deemed too great, when immortal souls are in danger.

To the rescue of these with praying heart and working hands! In prayer we shall find the courage that comes from faith pleading with Him who is able to save to the uttermost.

The ever faithful God shall grant the desires of your soul. Our common foes shall not triumph over us.

Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, ’tho all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”

Amen.

CONSECRATED FOR SERVICE.

(LAURITZ LARSEN.)

“And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.” Ruth 1, 16-18.



What a sad and yet a joyous picture this text calls to mind!

Naomi had moved with her family from home and countrymen to a strange land and people to escape the suffering and misery accompanying the famine in her beloved land.

She found a new home and new friends. All seemed to augur well for the future.

But soon her husband took sick and died, leaving her with her two sons in the strange land. Away from home, away from her fellow believers and the temple of her God, apparently poor, the future seemed dark and without promise.

Then her two sons were married to daughters of the land, Orpah and Ruth. But soon death visited them again.

Both her sons died, leaving her and the young widows alone.

The darkness of sorrow encompassed them.

What could they do?

In spite of her heathen surroundings, Naomi had kept faith in the promise of the living God. She longed for the fellowship of believers and the blessings of God's house. And God had visited her people and given them bread.

The light of hope penetrated the darkness. She would return to her old home and the people of God. The prospects of re-

union, of the fellowship, the worship and the comfort of God's messengers brought her an element of joy in her sadness.

Orpah and Ruth went with her on the way. She had told them of her people and the promises and love of her God. She had undoubtedly had many a serious talk with them about the one true God. The courage and comfort that she derived from her faith had impressed them.

But Naomi did not want them to leave their land and people thoughtlessly or only of sympathy for her. She had none of this world's goods to promise them. They would perhaps go to continued poverty and widowhood. So she urged them to return to their people and their gods. They must realize fully what they were facing and make their own choice.

Orpah returned to her home.

But Ruth would not. She clung to Naomi and to her God. "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

What a joyous moment for Naomi and for Ruth!

The joy of conviction. Truth, as taught and lived by Naomi, had won. Ruth accepted faith in the true God and gave her heart and life to him. She knew on whom she believed.

The joy of victory. All hesitation was conquered. Faith had won. Everything else was of minor importance. Nothing could keep Ruth from following Naomi, of whom she had learned the truth.

The joy of hope. Trusting implicitly in His providence, she would serve and worship the Lord with His people on earth, that she might be with them in all eternity.

Neither mother nor daughter were disappointed. God never forgets His own, though it may at times look dark and hopeless. Naomi and Ruth were well cared for and blessed! Their sadness was turned to joy everlasting. Today all Christians bless their memory.

O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe,
But, in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.

Amen.

DO NOT FORGET THE OLD FOLKS.

(JOHANNES HOIFJELD.)

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold, thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home. John 19: 26-27.



Jesus was the Son of God. And His Father had spoken on Mount Sinai these words: *Honor thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.* And in our Catechism we are given the assurance: This is the first commandment with a promise.

Also in this instance it is true that Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophets. He was a good, pious and loving son. Even as a twelve year old boy it is said of him: He went with them to Nazareth and obeyed them. He grew in stature, wisdom and favor with God and men.

He could not turn away from the Canaanitish mother's heart-appeals. He took compassion upon the Centurian and healed his son. He raised the daughter of Jairus. He met the weeping widow of Nain carrying her only son to the burial place. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not! And He said, Young man, arise! The mothers who had brought their little children to Him were not disappointed. He put His hands upon their little heads and blessed them. Such was Jesus. And such is He today. He understands better than anyone else the feelings and emotions in a father's and a mother's heart.

Our text brings us beneath the cross of Jesus on Good Friday. The Son of Man upon the tree, nailed to death. His mother Mary stands soulpierced at the foot of the cross. By her Christ's dearest disciple, John.

But He who did not forget His disciples in the gloomy night-watches of His dreadful death agony when He was betrayed by one of His own, so that He even then instituted the Sacrament of His body and blood. He does not forget His earthly mother.

Mother—sorrowful and helpless must be taken care of. She had filled her position as mother. Now she is released from the special relationship towards Him. Human ties are broken. "Woman, behold, thy son!" And to John the disciple of love: "Behold, thy mother!" "And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home."

Young brother and sister, are your father and mother living? Or do they lie peacefully yonder over in God's acre—If so, may their memory bless you!

But if they be both alive, or one of them, then learn of Jesus, the brave, warmhearted and faithful Son from Nazareth. Learn from Him how to act before them and how to treat them till their or your life's end.

You will remember that, will you not?

How much we really do owe them. We will possibly never understand it. Hardly before it is too late. And never will we be able to pay our debt to them. No, never!

But you ought to and should try. God, wills it! Honor them now and all the time.

Joseph had the right son-love. When he had become next to the king of Egypt he sent for his old father and arranged so he had some of the choicest soil of the land and lighter and happier days in his declining age.

Something similar Ruth also did. How beautiful it was of her not to leave her lonely and poor widowed mother-in-law. "*Only death shall part us. Your God shall be my God.*" Noble hearts think noble thoughts. And if there are any whom we should show nobility it is surely the dear old folks,

"Never speak harshly to an old man" admonishes Paul. God shall reward just as much, patience and consideration on our part as on their part. And it will gladden the Lord's Fatherheart and the Savior's Sonheart when we never refrain from fulfilling also that word of God which says: "Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Jesus Christ."

John Randolph says, that he would have been a French Atheist if it had not been for the memory of his dear mother who had folded his little hands and taught him to say: Our Father, who art in heaven. *Charles Lamb* once said: "What would I not give to call my dear mother back to earth for a single day, to ask her pardon, upon my knees, for all those acts by which I grieved her gentle spirit."

But this love we do not have of ourselves. We can not take it at leisure. It is a heavenly gift. God must give it to us. And He gives it by creating it in us. He increases it as we continue practising it. It thrives in us the more the love for self and sin dies. *Learn it from Christ! It blossomed on His path of denial and cross-bearing.*

Teach us the lesson Thou hast taught,
To feel for those Thy blood hath bought,
That every word, and deed, and thought,
May work a work for Thee.

In sickness, sorrow, want or care,
Whate'er it be, 'tis ours to share:
May we, where help is needed, there
Give help as unto Thee.

Amen



WHOM WILL YE SERVE?

(O. ANDREW NOREM.)

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." Joshua 24:15.



Idolatry has always been the greatest, and most prevailing sin.

Worship of self, subtile idolatry, or worship of idols, gross idolatry. The gross idolatry is practiced universally until this day in all heathen countries. And in the so called Christian countries the worship of self dominates.

The fool saith in his heart: "There is no God." These *fools* of our time love and trust in themselves or manimon. Jesus says: "Ye can not serve two masters." But notice every one will serve either the true living *God*, or he will love and trust or fear an idol. One is a slave to his habits, another is a slave to his vices.

Only true Christians are free and have given their hearts to God in Christ.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

What has been your choice, dear reader? Have you been faithful to your baptismal promise?

You made your vow then: "I renounce the devil, and all his works and all his ways." The Israelites had been baptized as they went through the Red Sea, and they had made a solemn

promise at Mt. Sinai. But one thing it is to promise and another it is to keep faithfully the holy covenant.

God does not force us into His service, nor does He compel us to continue in it.

But let us think of the consequences of idolatry.

When Israel was faithful to Jehovah all went well. — They were victorious and prosperous.

But when they *fell* into idolatry they were defeated by their enemies. And distress and diverse punishment came upon them.

Now dear reader: Have you ever been truly benefited by indulging in sin? Have you ever been happy and contented in an ungodly life?

Jesus asked the twelve apostles: "Will ye also go away?"

But Peter answered: "To whom should we go? Thou hast the eternal, living Word."

The eleven disciples never regretted that they remained faithful to Jesus.

But now the sad fact is, that many young people break their confirmation vow, and live ungodly. Many of our newly married do not say: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." God's richest blessing rests upon such house-holds where the fear of the Lord and the love to God reigns supreme.

Those who serve God best also serve their fellow men best.

God blesses His children and then they in turn can be of true blessing to others.

Joshua had led his people from victory to victory, and *now* he was anxious that the chosen people remain faithful to God.

This great leader had called the tribes together near Shechim, a historic place. Here God had spoken to Abraham, and here Jacob had purged his household of idolatry.

Here we have a man before us that has come to a firm conviction: "I and my house, we will serve the Lord."

He speaks from the heart. Dear reader, what is your resolve this day?

O what a blessed day it would be, if you say: *I and my house, we will serve the Lord.*"

Our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ, stands before us today, encouraging us to come unto Him. The Father will welcome us for His Son's sake.—We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

“When Jesus comes, O blessed story!
He works a change in heart and life.”

Amen.



*VIRILE CHRISTIANITY.

(J. E. LOBECK.)

Quit you like men, be strong. 1 Cor. 16-13.



Young men, the future depends upon you.

It is true, humanely speaking, speaking from man's point of view, the future depends on you.

Since such a vast responsibility rests on you, you will need a special armor, if you shall be able to lead in the battle, to guide and lead, and solve the difficult problems both in matters of religion and of civil life.

In order that you may be able to solve your problems correctly, to be an honor to God and a blessing to humanity, I know nothing better to remind you of and to imprint on your hearts, than the following words from the great apostle Paul.

After reminding the young of obedience to their parents—which is a major condition for a happy future and a long and active life on earth—and after giving parents, servants, and masters a timely and needful advice, he proceeds to show what powers we have to contend with, and the means and weapons we must use to fight with and that we may win:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.

And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God." Ef. 6, 10-17.

Read these words of the apostle over and over again, until you know them by heart! Then go forward to the battle and the struggle, and clad in this armor you will win the victory!

To depend upon God is true manliness and true greatness. To trust in the Lord, to hate and flee sin, that is to be strong. That is what history teaches us. The strongest and greatest men are those who have stood near God. Who has been more manly and more strong than Josef, Moses, Daniel, Paul, or Luther?

The future needs strong and courageous men.

But not less does the present need them.

It is the present which forms the foundation of the future. Just as the past forms the foundation of the present. Therefore, as the present is, so the future will be, to a large degree.

And here lies your great problem, young men. Are you armored? Can you master the problem?

It is you who will preach the gospel; it is you who will fill the political, social and domestic positions in the community.

Quit you like men, be strong!

Let no one take your place; fill it yourself! Should you become discouraged and disturbed—in "the gospel of peace" there is peace and rest. *There* is strength for the soul. *There* are great prospects. *There* is the solution to difficult questions. There is hope, joy and victory. Be honest, upright and righteous in all your actions, and dealings with men.

When you feel "*the burning arrows of the evil one*"—grasp the shield of faith, and you will be saved; for without faith ye cannot please God.

See how Christ led the struggle on the day of temptation! Without faith you will soon lose courage and fall on the battle ground.

Remember that the devil is existing and is in activity—that he is very skillful in his line. You will therefore need the full armor of God; but with that you will also win. Nothing less will do. *Quit you like men, be strong.*

Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep;
But strength in Thee I surely have,
Whose eyelids never sleep.

Amen.



STRONG AND VALIANT MEN FOR THE ARMY OF THE LORD.

(HENRY NOSS.)

"And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him." 1 Sam. 14:52.



In the days of thy youth remember thy Creator.

What a beautiful combination we have in youth and Christianity. All agree that youth and ideals go hand in hand. No one can form greater and nobler ideals than the one who is a child of God.

The Christian life is not dark, is not gloomy. The out and out Christian is a joyful Christian. The half and half Christian is the kind of a person a great number of us are—little acquainted with the joy of the Lord. Why should we live half ways up the hill and grope in mists, when we might have an unclouded sky and a visible sun over our heads, if we would only climb higher, and walk in the light of His face.

Take a few steps today and a few tomorrow, and in a short time you will have reached the summit of the hill, and can partake of the sunshine of God. To live in such atmosphere should appeal to every young person. It is a foretaste of glory divine.

The soldier does not always consider guard duty a very pleasant task. During the dark hours of night, and under perverse weather conditions it is not a very inviting proposition. But for the sake of peace and safety it is absolutely necessary that the different posts of a military establishment be carefully guarded.

So also in the life of the individual. If there is to be peace

with God, there must be a continual guarding against the devilish trinity: the world, the devil, and our own flesh.

That wonderful mechanism, the human body, must be watched night and day, and under all conditions of life, it must be a temple of the Holy Spirit.

"Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Prayer is as necessary to the soul as breath to the body. You cease breathing, and you are bodily dead; you cease praying, and you are spiritually dead. Pray, therefore, without ceasing. *"Ask, and ye shall receive."*

Whether you have been in the army a few months or a year or more you have many times staggered at the things you considered unreasonable. But there is nothing unreasonable about the religion of Jesus Christ. It is sanctified common sense.

The true Christian man is a sensible fellow. We read that the prodigal son came to himself. From that statement we infer that he had not been in the right mind, as far as his spiritual condition was concerned, until he came back to his Lord.

So the most reasonable thing in the world is to present our bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in this connection.

In speaking about the body in this connection, we mean the body of all the faculties of the human soul, all the members of the body and all the faculties of the human soul.

Young people, dedicate your lives from this day on to the service of the Master. It is pleasing in the sight of God. The Lord needs strong and valiant men in His army.

The Lord will cover you with His feathers and under His wings you can trust. His truth shall be your shield and your buckler.

You need not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. Having learned to cast all your cares upon the Lord, you did not tremble even on the battle field.

The situation was never so dark and hopeless but that there was a ray of light shining upon your pathway.

During a terrific thunderstorm the young folks were terribly

frightened, and grandma said, "We have no reason to be afraid when we have a God who can shake the universe."

"Under His wings I am safely abiding,
Tho the night deepens and tempests are wild,
Still I can trust him; I know he will keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am his child.
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me;
Resting in Jesus I'm safe evermore."

Amen.



FORWARD TO BATTLE.

(H. J. GLENN.)

O my soul, march on with strength. Judges 5, 21.



This exhortation comes out of the tumult of battle. For twenty years Israel had been severely oppressed by the Canaanites. Now, flushed with victory and eager for booty, Sisera, the captain of the enemy host, comes up to battle. On the high ground near the river Kishon in the midst of Esdraelon's fertile plain he encamps ready for plunder.

Israel lay helpless before him. Several of the tribes, lying far away to the south, could hardly bring help if they would. Gilead was beyond the Jordan. Asher, dwelling safely in his harbors, was busy with his shipping. Reuben considered the matter, but turned finally to his sheepfolds and the sound of the flute.

Business, profit, ease and pleasure had turned Israel away from God. However, through Deborah the Word of the Lord had reached the hearts of the people of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Ordinarily they were a peaceable, commercial people, thinking more of pencil and figures than of sword and spear.

Nevertheless upon the word of the Lord's prophetess, trusting Him who had called them to battle, they went forth and "hazarded their souls unto death."

Given their own choice, they would have preferred to fight from the sheltered crags of the mountain fastnesses; but now they must meet the crucial hour on the dead level of the wide-spreading valley below. A few against the many; a band of footmen against a host of iron chariots; a handful of moun-

taineers upon the plain against the marshalled army of kings! Surely it was a hopeless situation.

Hopeless as it indeed looked, they resorted at the right time to the right source for help. A right vision was caught. The surrounding dangers woke them up. In God was now their trust. In His name and in His power they went on to victory.

Even thus go forth with strength! The few are the remnant of the people of God. In reality 'tis the power of God against the vain pride and strength of the world.

After all there can be but one outcome. The enemy is overwhelmingly defeated. Those who escape the sword perish miserably in the violent waters of the swollen, rushing Kishon. Such is the completeness of God's victories. Such is the strength of the weak who put their trust in God!

O, my soul, thou too art sorely oppressed. Sin's captivity through many years has forged its mighty chains and thrown them about thee. Enemies strong and vicious design against thee.

On the one hand are the lure of ease and the love of pleasure, the engaging spell of increasing profits, the glitter and promise of worldly ambition, the sinful tendencies of stirring passions and the deep-grown falsity of the human heart.

On the other are the constant and insistent temptations of the world and the craft and wiles of the Wicked One. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against world rulers of darkness." How easy to sleep and grow worldly on the dead level of life's routine. How easy to fall in the pitched battles with enticing evil. Shame covers us like a scarlet robe.

No wonder we grow timid, yes fearful, and shrink from the call of God and conscience.

But hear, my soul, the Word of the Lord. *Forward to battle!* Yea, out into the open, down into the valley of danger, even though friends fail and you must go alone. Be reminded of the might and power of God. *Remember His promise to give His people victory.*

Tread vigorously on, my soul! Step out into the dark! The shattered remnant of God's people is mightier than the iron

chariots of the mighty. Thou shalt tread down strength; thou shalt take captivity captive. God's victory in you shall be complete, if you go forth at His command, clinging wholly to His promise, trusting fully to His gracious help and ready to hazard all for Him.

O, my soul, march on 'with strength, thy God shall give thee victory!

Onward Christian soldiers
Marching as to war;
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before!
Christ the royal master
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
See, his banners go

Amen.



VICTORIOUS YOUTH.

(P. C. DANIELSON.)

"I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one." 1 John 2:14.



What a privilege to be numbered among those who are young in years! As a rule, health and strength go hand in hand with youth. During these years the intellect is alert and receptive, and memory is at its best. How grateful a young person should be for these blessings which the loving Father above bestows so fully and richly!

But some young people are more fortunate than others. In addition to the natural gifts already mentioned, some young men and young women have been blessed with spiritual power. They not only hear and understand and retain the Word of God, but they have "overcome the evil one."

They have experienced the power of the Gospel. In this power they meet their daily duties and their many temptations, and they come out victorious.

They are not perfect, but they are growing in grace, and they are making progress in that which is good and well-pleasing to God.

To this class of young people the apostle directs his message of love. He follows the rule laid down by the Savior (Matt. 13:12): "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance." His purpose in writing may be seen from these words: "And these things we write that our joy may be made full." (1 John, 1:4.)

Young people are so apt to overlook the fact that they will not always remain young. The days, the weeks, the months, the

years are gradually slipping by. It will not be long, "before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." (Ecc. 12:1.)

How fortunate those persons who have spent the years and the strength of youth in preparing for old age! It is possible to be old in years, and yet to be young in spirit.

By the grace of God this possibility lies open to the young man or woman who reads these words. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Is. 40:30-31.)

A true Christian is concerned for the welfare and safety of others. He sees the unfortunate condition of those who are bound by the chains of sin and unbelief. He hears the silent cry saying to him: "But have me in thy remembrance, when it shall be well with thee." (Gen. 40:14.) For this reason his heart is filled with a desire to lead others to Christ.

But so many difficulties present themselves. Especially is this true in the case of those who have wasted the years and strength of youth.

Today there is crying need of workers for God's vineyard.

This cry should appeal to our young readers. It should lead them to study God's book, where He reveals His will and gives His orders to each heart and conscience.

O, Father of love and mercy! I thank Thee for Thy blessed Word by which Thou leadest me to the cross of Christ. I praise Thy holy name for creating in me a desire to serve Thee and to point others to Jesus the Savior. Grant me a humble, obedient heart so that when Thou callest I may say cheerfully and with courage: "Here am I; send me." (Is. 6:8.)

"Thy word is everlasting truth,

How pure is every page!

That holy book shall guide our youth

And well support our age."

Amen

THE BIRTHRIGHT.

(C. E. NORDBERG.)

“Esau despised his birthright.” Gen. 25:34.



The story of Esau and Jacob is a familiar one. It is the story of twin brothers. They were born of the same parents, and raised in the same home, practically in the same environments. And yet how different are their lives. Jacob becomes Israel, the prince of God; while Esau becomes Edom, the red, the unholy and profane man.

Esau was the first-born. He was a strong and robust man, and had a great many things in his favor. But he did not make the most of his opportunities.

The birthright was the most precious thing he had. After he had sold it he became a profane man. The benediction of the Almighty was taken away from him and the wrath of God was upon him.

As Lutheran young people we have a birthright, the covenant of our baptism. It is a precious heritage, given to us on that memorable day, when we were carried by loving hands in holy baptism and placed in the strong and protecting arms of Almighty God and made His children. To be born of a good family or fall an heir to wealth may give us a prominent place in life; but it cannot be compared to the great privilege of becoming a child of God in youth.

Some of us have precious memories from those beautiful days

in childhood when we lived that intimate life and communed with God in prayer. Well has the poet sung of those days:

“Those beautiful days, those beautiful days,
When innocent childhood was ours.
They came as a dream, a bright summer dream,
As sweet as the breath of the flowers.”

They were the happiest days of our life, for then we were still in the covenant with our God.

Now it is also possible to remain in the covenant of our baptism. Even until this day we have examples of people who have remained true to God from childhood to old age.

But it is a sad fact that so many of our young people like Esau sell their birthright and despise it. Esau desired the red pottage. The young people of today become desirous of the things of this world, worldly gains, the pleasures of life and carnal desires. They become slaves of their own desires and deliberately sacrifice the best that is in them just to satisfy their carnal mind.

Esau fell a victim to his desires when he came home from the field and was faint. Many a young Christian will withstand the temptations of life when he is strong; but he will fall when he becomes faint and weak. It is a serious thing for a Christian to become faint. In such moments as well as in the strong moments of our life, let us watch and pray lest we fall into temptations.

Esau sought to regain his birthright. He “sought it diligently and with tears, but he found no place for a change of mind.” Hebrews 12:17. Have you sold your birthright, my friend? Seek to regain it with tears today. God has not broken the covenant. His arms of mercy and grace are yet outstretched. But there comes a day when there is “no place for a change.”

I've wandered far away from God,
Lord, I'm coming home.
I now repent with bitter tears
Lord, I'm coming home.
Coming home, coming home,
Never more to roam.
Open now Thy arms of love,
Lord, I'm coming home.

Amen.

OVERPOWERING GOD.

(JOH. GRANSKOU.)

And He said: Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. Gen. 32, 28.



O Lord and Savior, I am a stranger and pilgrim here on earth, lead thou me on to my fatherland above! Amen.

On his way home. Yes, Jacob was on his way home. For a very long period he had been away. Fully twenty years since he left home in flight for his young life. And poor Jacob was himself not without blame for being compelled to turn his back upon home and flee for safety.

But praise be to God! he is now returning home. Dear mother is, may be, no more. But old, blind father Isaac is perhaps still anxious, awaiting with open arms to bid his youngest boy a welcome home.

Not so with Esau. Yet filled with hatred and bitter enmity towards the brother, he waited eagerly for his arrival ready to knock Jacob down at their first meet. Just listen to the messengers report: "And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, we came to thy brother Esau and also he cometh to meet thee and four hundred men with him." A dreadful greeting indeed from a brother that he had not seen in twenty years.

Friends, the situation looked awful. It was indeed discouraging and dangerous also.

The way home seemed blockaded. No wonder that Jacob became greatly afraid and distressed.

What should he do?

To take up arms and jump into a fierce fight would give one of three results. Either stain his hands with brother-blood and thus forcible to storm ahead over the corps of his brother; or, as would be more likely, he himself to be forcefully and quickly overpowered and slain right there at the very gate of the home of his childhood; or in the last and final struggle be compelled to retreat and once more flee for his dear life with the hope to see his old father and the fatherland for ever destroyed. But none of these possibilities were inviting for the longing, godly homecommer.

And thank God! Jacob was to be saved from it all. For as it is with most pilgrims, toiling onward to the eternal home above, when the outlook is most dark the angels of heaven are there and help is near.

Look up young friend, a stranger is appearing! And without any excuse, question or introduction at all this sturdy, strong and mighty champion challenges Jacob and the two wrestle the whole night long.

In this way the mind and thoughts of Jacob were turned in another direction—from himself upward to the holy hills from whence the help must come always.

May we all learn the lesson: "My help cometh from the Lord." So Jacob, though badly wounded and nearly dead from exertion and strain, (thus recognizing the voice of his grandfathers, his fathers and his own God), cries out in hope and faith: "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me!"

And with daybreak approaching the blessing came also: "Thy name shall be called Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed." Oh, what a blessing! A selfaccused, wounded, weak and helpless sinner wrestled with almighty God in prayer—and prevailed.

Think of it, friends. Jacob with his new name, Israel, had come to the blessed experience of which we all sing: "With might of ours naught can be done, soon were our loss effected; but for us fights the valiant One, whom God himself elected." And now no power on earth or in hell could no longer keep the

blessed Israel out from the promised land. The door to home stands wide open. A brother-kiss is awaiting him.

My dear friends, are you on the way home? "Heaven is my home." So we are singing. Yes, and Christ is the way to heaven. Do you go with Jesus obediently in fellowship and faith? If so, you have turned your face towards the home-land. God bless your journey!

Surely, there may be enemies ahead and all around you for all that. Troubles of many kinds, temptations, and threatenings from within and without may often seem to blockade the pathway. "But fear not! For it is your fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Whatever resistance may turn up against you, take it all to God in prayer. Remember that Jacob was alone with God in darkest night, when he wrestled with the Lord and prevailed.

Do not forget your silent prayer in secret—*alone with God*. Insist upon the blessings from above. "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me!" And like Jacob you shall by Gods mighty and graceful hand be led sure and safe to the glorious home in the blessed fatherland above.

O Lord and my God in Christ Jesus, I beseech Thee, be with me at all times with Thine Spirit and always—

"awake me, turn my mind, my sight
With Jacob strong in hope and faith
Up, up from earth to heaven!"

Amen



MORAL COURAGE.

(K. A. KASBERG.)

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
Gen. 39, 9.



Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob, brought up under the love and care of God-fearing parents, was alone and forsaken, a slave in haughty Egypt. That rich and powerful country of the dim past.

Out of selfish envy his evil-minded brothers had seized him and sold him to some passing merchants, who in turn had sold him to Potiphar, captain of the king's guard. Sad and lonely, he had only one to whom he could turn in his misery, Jehovah, his father's God and his own.

And God did not forsake him.

Joseph tried conscientiously to do all his work in the interest of his Master. And God blessed all his efforts, so that Potiphar soon placed him at the head of his household affairs, leaving "all that he had in Joseph's hand." The captain of the king's guard represented the haughtiest aristocracy, where ambition, pride and pleasure ruled supreme, and moral righteousness too often was forgotten. Of this Potiphar's wife gives us a sad illustration.

VICTORY IN TEMPTATION.

Joseph, instructed and trained from childhood in the moral precepts of Jehovah, had grown up an innocent and pureminded boy in his father's house. Now he had been thrown headlong in among the surroundings of a worldly and sensual society.

Most young men would, under similar circumstances, quickly enough have taken the cue from their superiors.

But Joseph remained true to the principles of his home training. This he did, although he must have been aware that he would risk awakening the woman's hatred and revenge, who in her unholy love tried to tempt him to sin.

He knew what God's law required of him, and he neither yielded nor hesitated.

True to God and his own conscience, his decisive answer to temptation was, "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*"

THE COST OF VICTORY.

Perhaps you will say, "But Joseph did not win out. On the contrary, he was thrown into prison."

My dear young friend! He who wants to win in any fight against sin and evil must not fear the scars of battle. Envy, hatred, misrepresentation, revenge, and even worse things, may fall to his lot.

But the scars only enhance the victory.

Do not forget this, if you should be tempted to yield to the inducements of the godless for fear of incurring their hatred. They may become your bitter enemies and do their best to injure your reputation, *but do not yield.*

Remember that your life will be finally judged, not by the standards of men, but by the standards of God, as revealed in His holy law and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pray unto Him, that through faith in Christ you may receive the moral courage of Joseph to resist temptation in all its forms.

Only by following God and doing His will can you make your life a real blessing to others, and to yourself.

It may appear to you that following other paths will give you many advantages, but they are false advantages and will fade away.

The soul that lives away from God is lost.

PRAYER.

O God, help me to be strong in faith, and in love to Him who on the cross won the victory over sin and death and satan. Grant that I through faith in Him may be cleansed from sin and receive power to stand in the evil day. Heavenly Father, Thou dost not forsake Thy faithful ones. Help me to be faithful like Joseph in all trials and temptations. Grant that I may love Thee above all else, and that in the stress of life my rule of action may unfailingly be, "*How can I sin against my God?*" I humbly ask it, O Father, in the name of Jesus.

With Jesus do I wake,
With Him I rest while sleeping,
With Jesus everything
I dare, safe in His keeping;
In my last resting place
With Jesus I shall lie,—
With Him who is the life,
I therefore shall not die.

Amen.



THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

(S. L. KLYVE.)

Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication to the Lord. Dan. 6, 11.



In an Alpine gorge, in the pathway of the storms a tree was standing.

It was a wonder to travellers, for there seemed to be no soil for it to grow in.

But when examined a little closer, it was discovered that the roots had insinuated themselves into the crevices of the rocks, and worked their way around them, so that they not only found sufficient nourishment, but had so laid hold upon the strength of the mountain as to make it strong to withstand the furious tempests that swept over it.

In the "Alpine path" of God's people we find similar wanderers.

We have heard of souls growing strong in the most sterile situations, becoming great, notwithstanding the fierce tempests that howled around them.

Among such is to be found Daniel, the princely character, who rose sublimely above the idolatries of Babylon, and like the mighty tree rooted in the Eternal Rock was able to stand in the "evil days." Ef. 6:13.

He had, in early youth, given his life to the Lord, and from then he went on in faithful service of his God. The Lord preserveth the faithful. Ps. 31:23. 145:20.

We are familiar with the story of Daniel's trials, especially the one with which our text is connected.

His enemies, moved by envy because of the distinction he had attained in the empire, had been seeking for something against him, that they might use to accomplish his ruin. But they found nothing.

Daniel discharged the duties of his office so effectively that no flaw could be found anywhere.

The main reason for this was his *faithfulness to God*.

Faithfulness to God and fellowship with God are the two outstanding facts in Daniel's life.

Three times a day did this great man take time to kneel in sweet communion with his God, and received from him counsel and strength. Inspired and directed by this he went forth and transacted all his duties in harmony with the divine guidance.

No wonder that even the keenest scrutiny could find nothing against him.

Finally the conspirators concluded that there remained only one way which gave hope of success: *His relation with God.*

We need not repeat the device of these plotters, nor how the king was caught like a fly in the spider's web, nor the issuing of the fatal decree.

But what was the effect of the decree on Daniel?

Did he comply? Did he try to evade it by prudence or any other subterfuge?

No, his soul revolted against such thought.

He did neither surrender his principle nor his manhood to any expediency to secure his safety. He would not take one *entreating step*, when the occasion called for heroic conflict for his God.

So with the prospect of an awful death before him, untried—and with his windows open towards Jerusalem—the home of his people,—his home, he bows rejoicingly before his God.

He did not even in this most trying hour of his life forsake his God or people.

The decree that brought Babylon on its knee before its king, could not with all its threats of doom keep Daniel from bowing before his God. The fiercest tempest could not uproot this tree.

Through daily communication with God he was rooted and grounded in the Everlasting Rock, and was sustained by it. So when the supreme test was ushered in, he stood like the Rock itself, glorifying his God. When all others were cringing in the dust before their idol, Daniel was in the presence of his Maker in sweet fellowship, and with the voice of prayer he mingled the voice of thanksgiving.

He knew his God. He had so often experienced His mighty arm sustaining him. Come what may—he was safe! *He was more than conqueror.*

What a shining example!

May this godly man's example be a beckoning hand to all young persons. First of all to *give* their lives to God like Daniel, and then to go forward to stronger faith, deeper consecration, and greater service.

What was possible for Daniel, is possible for all through Jesus Christ.

I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me. Fil. 4. 13.

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
In this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign:
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the cross, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Amen.



*LIKE STAUNCH PLANTS AND ROYAL CORNERSTONES.

(M. O. BÖCKMAN.)

When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as cornerstones hewn after the fashion of a palace. Psalm 144, 12.



My youthful friend, you will understand this prayer of David for the young people. Is it not as though it should have been spoken out from your own heart? Does not every uncorrupted and intelligent boy and girl desire just that which David here prays God to grant the young people of His nation? That the young man may be as a plant grown up in his youth.

Hearty and strong and not weak and stunted. And that the young woman may be well built and beautiful as a cornerstone hewn after the fashion of a palace.

This is surely your innermost desire.

It is the desire also of your father and mother.

It is the desire of our people, especially of its eminent men and women. Thrift, strength, and beauty is the desire of every untainted young man and woman. And all who behold you in the light of understanding and in the fear of God will desire this for you. For this desire is from the Lord, even as David, in the Spirit, prayed to God that the young people of His nation might share in this blessing.

But now, let neither old nor young take this prayer of David in vain. For, as truly as David, led by the Spirit of God, de-

* Translated by M. C. Johnshoy.

sired that the sons and daughters of his people should receive from the Lord a vigorous and beautiful bodily growth, since this is also the gift of God, our Creator, thus he, who is acquainted with the king of Israel, the man after the heart of God, knows also that physical development and beauty is far from all that He desires for them.

David knows that they consist of more than body alone, however precious this may be. They are human beings. They are persons. They have spirit and heart. From bitter experience David had learned that physical beauty and strength are of very little importance. Yea, even a source of danger for the youth, unless they are matched with beauty and power of spirit and heart in the knowledge and fear of God.

David knew full well the tragic history of his enemy Saul, concerning whom it was said: A young and goodly man; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people. Saul was, indeed, as a plant grown up in his youth.

But you know that this did not make him a happy man, nor did it prove a blessing to his people.

Why did it not?

Because his heart was not honest and good in the eyes of God.

And David, himself, the great hero of all young people, how did he fare when he forgot to keep watch over his heart and spirit?

Read his prayer in the 51st Psalm and you shall see it: Hide Thy face from my sins, he says to the Lord, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

So deeply into misery had he sunk!

A man who also from his own life had encountered that bitter experience concerning the vanity of bodily beauty and strength without the spirit and the fear of God, would naturally desire for the sons and daughters of his people more than mere physical grace and power.

He prays for a clean heart and a right spirit, that they also

in this respect might be as plants grown up in their youth, and as cornerstones hewn after the fashion of a palace.

Therefore, my young friends, *seek bodily strength and beauty, but above all strive after spiritual power and grace.* That is according to the will of God. And whatsoever you do according to His will, will bring blessings upon you, and not upon you alone, but upon all your people, as David says: Blessed is the people who have such sons and daughters.

For as thou art in the springtime of thy life so wilt thou be in the years of thy manhood. And as the youth of a people are, so will the nation of the future be. Such is the law of your life. Such is the law of mankind. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. *The fruit of the harvest depends upon its springtime growth.*

O, that we could say of all our young people as it is written concerning our Saviour in His youth: And *Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.*

But, if this shall come to pass, if you, my dear friend, shall increase in strength and beauty both in soul and body, then you must bear two things in mind.

On the one hand, you must remember that nature does not give the growth, as the wise, or more correctly, the fools of this world imagine, but this development is the gift of God.

On the other hand, you must strive earnestly to attain this physical and spiritual growth, under prayer that God will prosper your efforts. You have read: The fool saith in his heart, there is no God, and you know that the majority of people think and act according to this foolish doctrine in matters that concern their bodily welfare.

The wise men of today say: what has God to do with this? We will have to provide for this ourselves through the forces of nature, without depending upon a God.

This is heard in the lecture room. We read it in the books of today.

But this doctrine is just what David prays God to protect him from and you must ask the Lord in mercy to protect you from the

same evil. It is a falsehood and a fraud which has cast many a young man and woman into misery.

The truth is found in Christ's statement: Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. That is: the forces of nature cannot support the natural life of man, nor promote its development without God. *All this depends upon the creating and preserving power of the Word and will of God.*

If you, therefore, desire a strong and beautiful stature, seek it with God and not in nature alone. But then you will also be protected against the slavery which so ill becomes the American and Christian youth, the children of the freewoman, in this question of attaining beauty, namely, becoming a slave to the youth of the Parisian street or to the uncivilized and heathen sons and daughters of Africa. For he who seeks an increase in strength and beauty with God, will not accept that which man's want of sense and sinful lust has to offer.

And as it is in regard to the physical growth in strength and beauty, so also in regard to the spiritual, to that of the heart. No human power can produce it. It is the Lord's work. Therefore David prayed to God to create in him a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within him.

But do we not have to exert ourselves in order to increase in power and grace?

Indeed we do, and this is required in the attainment both of spiritual and bodily strength and beauty.

It is God's word like the other which you must not forget. But we must strive under prayer to God, in faith and hope in His Son, Jesus Christ. In this manner He gives us the increase.

May God grant that you, our sons, may by His grace, for Christ's sake, become as plants grown up in your youth, and that you, our daughters, may be as cornerstones hewn after the fashion of a palace! *Therein lies your honor. Therein lies your happiness for time and eternity.* It is the joy of your parents.

Blessed is the people, who fares thus.

Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah.

Give, thou, thy youth to God,
With all its budding love;
Send up thy op'ning heart to Him,
Fix it on One above.

Amen.

SPIRITUAL POWER.

(H. C. REX.)

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Eph. 6:10—13.



It is a great art to be able to keep the windows of the soul perpetually open to the things that are beautiful, pure and holy. For example, the individual who can perceive the handiwork and glory of God in the gorgeous array of autumn colors, visible in field and wood, is permitting light to stream in upon his soul,

To be receptive, observing, alert, quick to trace an idea back to its original source, to be able to perceive all the associated relationships of one thought, and to know how to use the common place things of life to illustrate the spiritual and heavenly, are traits well worth cultivating.

The author of the verses on which this meditation is based, had those traits developed to a very fine point. It was, probably, while Paul was chained by a Roman soldier that he wrote the epistle to the Ephesians. That soldier recalled to Paul's mind a whole train of thoughts—the whole world of the soldier's life and activity. The armour that he wore, the battles that he fought, the brilliant victories that he won, were to Paul's mind an emblem of the Christian soldier clad in spiritual armour, warring against invisible enemies, and achieving glorious triumphs. The marvel-

ous physical strength of the one soldier served to illustrate the invincible spiritual power of the other.

But the Christian soldier does not by nature possess spiritual power. He derives it from another source, and strange as it may seem, he does not secure it from sources and places where our natural inclinations are most prone to look for it. Not in wealth, not in intellectual and cultural attainments, not in the genius of civilization, not in large, well-equipped, well-trained armies, not in gigantic warships, built of the stoutest steel, not in powerful guns, nor destructive explosives, *but in the Lord, and in the Lord alone, is the source and secret of the Christian soldier's spiritual power.*

The Lord God Almighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the creator and preserver of this vast universe, is He who endows the Christian with divine strength.

By exercising faith in Christ, the Christian soldier connects himself with God, becomes an ally of His, and thus he may draw upon the omnipotent power of God in waging his offensive and defensive warfare.

As the electric current passes through the copper wire and provides light or power, so along the invisible wire of faith in God's Word flows the power of God into the human soul, and makes it strong in the Lord.

As the sap which resides in the branches is that which has been derived from the vine, so the spiritual life that is found in Christ's disciples is that which has been derived from the True Vine, Christ. Thus an organic union exists between Him and them, and they can say, "The Lord is on our side."

The Christian soldier needs the spiritual power and life that he derives from God because of the nature of the enemy which he has to fight. We Christian soldiers must engage in a conflict with evil forces and beings that are more powerful than mere man.

The innumerable host of evil spirits, with the Prince of Evil at their head, are arrayed against us. Always do these powerful, superterrestrial beings of darkness, through various agencies, by treachery and cunning, hurl their hellish darts at all soldiers of Christ. One unprotected, vulnerable spot may be all the enemy

needs to make a fatal thrust, as was the case with the fabled Achilles. One unguarded portion of the citadel of our hearts invariably becomes a breach into which our Adversary hurls his damaging temptations and powerful projectiles that all but overwhelm and destroy us. This suffices to show the necessity of our being clad in the armour and remaining strong in the power with which God can furnish us.

God is mightier than all our enemies, and has triumphed over them! We, panoplied in God's armour, are assured of certain victory.

Putting on the different pieces of this armour—the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of salvation—God places into our hands power and weapons to wage a successful warfare.

In transmitting to us this invisible, spiritual armour, God makes it possible for Christ's power to be our power, Christ's strength our strength, Christ's victory our victory. And it is only when we array ourselves in the armour which God provides that we can expect to hold the vantage ground in this terrible conflict, come out victors in the strife and at last in a spirit of triumph say with the Apostle, "*I have fought a good fight.*"

Uphold me in the doubtful race,
Nor suffer me again to stray;
Strengthen my feet, with steady pace
Still to press forward in Thy way;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite.

Amen.



THE UNION WITH CHRIST.

(E. O. CHELGREN.)

“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in Him.” Joh. 6:56.



These words of our Lord and Savior reveal unto us the “Holy of Holies” of our faith. A wonderful revelation! Is it possible that we poor sinful beings may dwell in Christ and Christ in us? Yes, so He has assured us.

The aim and intent of God’s dispensation toward man is no less than to bring us into union with Jesus Christ. God sent His Son into the world to suffer and die that you and I through Him might be saved from sin and death and be re-united with God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

It is indeed a great privilege to be the objects of God’s love and care. To be the sheep of His fold, fed and nurtured in the green pastures of His Word, to drink from the fountain of His redemptive grace. But “to live in Him and He in us,” what a glorious life! And yet, this will be our lot if we in true faith abide by His word and partake of His Holy Sacrament in which the fullness of His salvation is bestowed upon us.

Through His Word and Sacraments Christ gives Himself unto us; through faith we receive Him. Through faith we accept Him, for “as many as received Him, gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

This union with Christ begins in Holy Baptism and is renewed when we confess and renounce our sins and look to Him alone for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. We have a special op-

portunity to do this when the Word of grace and pardon is proclaimed unto us and when we come to the Lord's Table. "This is my body, this is my blood, take, eat and drink!" Do not ask how it is possible, for no man can comprehend the mystery and power of God.

Consider the great and glorious privilege which this union with Christ brings. You become partakers of all that Christ is and what He has done as mediator. His Spirit will dwell in you; His righteousness is yours, His life your life, His victory over sin and death your victory. His inheritance is also yours, you are partakers of the Divine Sonship, "Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Young friend, abide in the promise of Christ.

Come and partake of His Holy Supper when you have opportunity to do so. The Lord's Supper is the special sacrament of our life union with Christ. Come with a penitent heart and in true faith in His promises. Come with a desire to be found in Jesus, your dear Lord and Savior. You shall then find that peace and joy which the world at its best cannot give.

Union with Christ will manifest itself in your daily life. You will receive grace and strength to conform your life unto God's will and you will be "more than conquerors through Him that loved you."

However, there are some things for you to observe in order that you may remain in the union with Christ. You must abstain from all evil. 1 Thess. 5:22. You must keep the commandments of Christ. 1 Joh. 3:24. You must confess Him. 1 Joh. 4:15. And you must dwell in the love of God. 1 Joh. 4:16.

Friend, meditate over the passages just quoted, they will be helpful. May God keep you until you see Him face to face!

Nearer, my God to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!
Through Word and Sacrament,
Thou com'st to me.
Thy grace is ever near,
Thy Spirit ever here,
Drawing to Thee.

Amen.

WHAT DO THE HEAVENS DECLARE?

(P. A. MATTSON.)

"The heavens declare the Glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." Ps. 19: 1.



Behold the wonders of God's creation!

Two things in particular arouses our admiration—the heavens, decorated with the millions of stars during the night, and the moral laws within us. Whence all this? They must have a Maker and an origin. Only a fool will venture to deny this.

When the generals of Napoleon, during a starlight night, were pacing the deck of a war vessel on the Mediterranean, tried to disprove the existence of God, the mighty emperor pointed heavenward and said, "Who made all those?" They could not answer him and so they kept quiet. On their standpoint without a God, how could they reasonably answer such a question?

At present there is a poisonous theory—for it is nothing else—and according to this all those wonderful bodies that are circling in the distant space have sprung into existence automatically without any maker.

But think of the folly! *Nature reveals God.* The firmament showeth His handiwork. O, the greatness of God, manifested in His works! What majesty is not revealed among those countless millions! But the heavens do not only declare the glory of God, they also declare His omnipotence and His wisdom and all His works shall glorify His blessed name.

But all those wonders would be a sealed book, were it not for the fact that we have a key to all this given us in the revealed

Word. In the light of this book I find a satisfactory explanation of it all, and the heavens receive a new and wonderful meaning.

Our temporary existence on this globe finds in it a satisfactory explanation—it tells us of Him, who came down from heaven to throw a bridge of love from heaven to earth. He points out how it has become possible to come across this bridge and be with God in the mansions which He has prepared for us.

This has become possible by reason of the fact that God has revealed Himself to man in His word. How have not the bygone generations been looking for a spectroscope that they might be able to see more of the mysteries of heaven and be able to attain to the heavenly home! It was this idea that prompted Plato to say, "Give me one word of God, and I shall be able to pass safely over the bridge that connects time with eternity."

We have not only one word of God, but many, and hence it is possible for us to descipher the wonders of heaven, and in their light behold the majesty of God. We have the assurance, that the heavenly city, whose founder and maker is our God, who shall come down, prepared as a bride for her bridegroom.

From this viewpoint, what wonders are not manifested in the works of the Creator! How important is not the human life in reference to eternity! What objects for our faith and hope! What longing should not manifest itself within us to reach that wonderful goal!

No wonder that a Christian, who has had a glimpse of the heavenly city in the spectroscope of the Word of God, sighed, in his last moments, when questioned as to what he wished for: "*Only heaven!*"

When such majesty is manifested in His handiwork, how glorious must not the Maker of it all be, the Fountain of all life, happiness and glory, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

"Abode of peace, my Father's home forever!
My weary soul in faith doth yearn for thee.
I homeward look to Thee, my Lord and Saviour,
To thine abode of peace eternally.
Our faith is weak, our soul oppressed,
Our vision dim and failing."

Amen.

MAGNIFY THE WORK OF THE LORD.

(ANDR. BERSAGEL.)

“Remember that thou magnify His work, whereof men have sung.”
Job 36:24.



The interior of St. Peter's cathedral, we are told, with its thousands of arches and pillars form a magnificent cross—if viewed from a certain point. Every line meets in the cross as a sacred symbol. But viewed from any other angle the entire structure appears like an innumerable mass of broken lines.

God's creation presents a total picture too which from the viewpoint of understanding designates a scepter—a symbol of majesty, power, and glory. In the entire creation the designing hand of God is clearly seen from the invisible laws and forces to the visible causes in nature, history, and the life of man. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, so that they are without excuse.”

In everything there is a definite purpose, intelligence, harmony; but viewed only by man's limited reason the creation appears to be merely fragmentary. From the dawn of mankind people with an open and unprejudiced mind have honored and magnified the mighty Creator impressed by the unique character of His work.

“Behold the stars, behold the leaves, behold the worm in the dust,” everything gives unmistakable evidence of the work of God. “Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise and with Thy honor all the day.”

In the midst of God's creation stands man with his intelligence,

his God-consciousness, his eternal longings, his desire for communion and understanding—and in a thousand different ways God seeks to meet us. It is the echo of the "Worldharmony" that runs through these words uttered by Kepler: "O, Father of Light, Thou who by the light of nature kiest us as a longing for the light of grace that Thou mayest lead us into the light of glory—I thank Thee, Thou my Creator and Lord, that Thou through Thy creation hast gladdened me when I was employed at the work of Thy hands."

At times we see His work in the scepter—and at times we see it in the cross; but the cross is a riddle which faith alone can apprehend—and the scepter is a sign for which we bow in recognition of our dependence on the power and greatness of God. God and His work are greater than the reason of man. We cannot master Him. We enter into the temple of His creation with the words of Paul in our hearts: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out."

In Christ the work of God is most gloriously revealed; in Him the work of God is incarnated, visualized, and centralized; in Him the broken harmony is restored. In Christ we find the center for our life and our faith, which will make us into free and noble beings; which will give us victory over all destructive forces; which will lift our soul into communion with God, so that surrounded by His work we may walk in His light, and go forth from the dawn of the morning to the clear, busy day.

Our life then, whether we live in humbleness or before the admiring eyes of the world, will become a melodious tone in the great symphony that sings the praise of God.

A true Christian life is a continuous exaltation of the work of God; for we bear the imprint of the Creator upon our forehead and in our soul. We go forth in the glory of holiness and in the strength and beauty of youth—not as slave-ridden souls, but as free creatures who with full consciousness lead lives to His honor.

There is nothing more degrading to the name and work of God than a life devoted to destructive forces and evil passions. It is a mockery to Him whose children we are, and who should

be magnified through all His creation. It is a brutal destruction of the divine harmony.

Remember, therefore, that thou magnify His work; He who has created us in His image and crowned us with honor and glory and appointed us to rule over the works of His hands.

Let it be a daily desire "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God."

The predominating motive in all our aims and undertakings should be to magnify the work of God—a dedication to holy temple service like the Levites in the old covenant.

Remember that Thou magnify His work—not as a passive spectator, neither as one who merely by mouth and heart testify to His power and greatness; but as one who through "the toil of daily labor and duty"—not only sees the ideal, but lives it to the honor and glory of God—then shall the most insignificant services be elevated into true greatness, and the most humble life shall become a song of praise to our Creator. "Remember that thou magnify His work, whereof men have sung."

Sing praise to God Who reigns above
The God of all creation,
The God of power, the God of love,
The God of our salvation,
With healing balm my soul He fills,
And every faithless murmur stills;
To God all praise and glory!

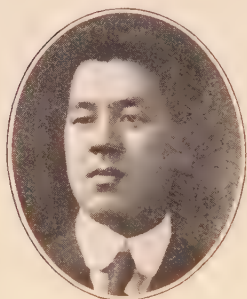
Amen.



OUR GOD FOREVER.

(HAJIME INADOMI.)

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14.



Here is one of the great secrets of great living.

Wonderful is the strength of the warrior. Mighty is the influence of the statesman. All powerful seems the inventor. But greater still is this truth: "This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."

It gives strength to the weak; comfort to the wearied; healing to the broken-hearted; peace to the contrite; hope to the dying. It lifts up our vision of life to the highest ideals of the Kingdom of God, and constrains our service of love with the most powerful motive of loving God.

And this is not mere hearsay nor tradition, but a real living experience of God's children all over the world.

But who is this God whom we call our God? He is the all powerful God. It is He who made heaven and earth, and controls the march of the stars and the moon and the sun. Without His knowledge not one of the sparrows shall fall on the ground and by Him the very hairs of our head are all numbered. And it is He who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the grass of the field. He knows and supplies all the needs of men. He can take care of us infinitely better than we can take care of ourselves. Yes, "it is He that hath made us, and we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." He is our heavenly Father whom Jesus revealed unto us. This God, holy, gracious and loving, is our own God.

And if He be our God, He is ours for ever and ever. Not

only for today or for tomorrow, but through our life, even unto eternity, He is ours. *God is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

"Time and change are busy ever;
Man decays, and ages move;
But His mercy waneth never;
God is Wisdom, God is Love."

On nothing can we trust save on God, for some day heaven and earth shall pass away, but our God is eternal, and His love is eternally unchanging. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." What a great thought it is to think that this wonderful God is our own forever and ever.

And "He will be our guide even unto death." Life is never stationary. We are tending somewhere. In our life, move we must.

Are we moving upward or downward? Are we tending toward the light or toward the darkness? Who is our guide? Is He the Light of all lights?

If He be our God, "He will be our Guide." He is our magnet which draws everything in our life heavenward. He is our Light to lighten our path to the gate of Heaven which knows no darkness. And like a shepherd He leads us. "I am the good shepherd; and I know my own." He knows the name of each one of us. He knows the trials of each. He thinks and cares for each as if there were in the world no other one but you yourself.

So, let Him be your guide throughout your life, and to your dying hours. He will graciously lead you on the path of righteousness by His own loving hand.

Protected by Him, you can resist all attacks; guided by Him you shall never perish. Even after death He will conduct you to the fountain of eternal life.

"Our changeful lives are ebbing to an end,
Onward to darkness and to death we tend;
O Conqueror of the grave, be Thou our Guide,
Be Thou our Light in death's dark eventide;
Then in our mortal hour will be no gloom,
No sting in death, no terror in the tomb. Amen.

PAY THE LORD!

(OTTO LOCK.)

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High." Ps. 50:14.



I have pledged, and would not falter,
Truth, obedience, love to Thee;
I have vows upon Thine altar,
Ever Thine alone to be;
And for ever
Sin and all its lusts to flee.

Under the Jewish dispensation, "when God remembered sins," He caused offerings to be often repeated; but under the Gospel dispensation or the new covenant, the sins of His child are never again remembered, because under this covenant, Christ, "by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

We became partakers in this new covenant through Holy Baptism, and renewed our baptismal vow at our confirmation. The offering God requires of His children is thanksgiving, but true thanksgiving can only flow from a heart filled with gratitude towards God. We must see that God is good, that He bestows upon us blessings and mercy, though we only deserve punishment, because we commit sin daily.

But this can only be fully realized by those who fully understand their own lost condition and God's great love and mercy towards sinners. We must have seen the Deity veiled in humanity, dwelling among men for the purpose of showing men that God is a God of love—a God to offer His only begotten Son as the great sacrifice in order to purchase us from the dominion of sin and death.

If the greatness of this love fills our hearts—we will learn

what gratitude is. The forgiveness of sin which is in Jesus Christ will be the source of joy and thanksgiving. There will also at the same time be a strong desire to endeavour to serve God. It is in the power of every man to make some attempt to show that the heart is not idle or insensible, but that it is full and big, and knows itself to be so, though it often wants strength to bring forth thanksgiving and praise.

And sin forgiven becomes sin hated, avoided, renounced and crucified.

Men are capable of gratitude and well accustomed to give it expression in thanksgiving, but, through blindness or perverseness many overlook and deny the prime Benefactor, and recognizing not His hand, they give Him no praise.

The greatest and most sacred ties of duty that man is capable of, are founded upon gratitude. As the child is in duty bound to love and obey its parents in recompence of its being, so is the Christian the more bound to love and obey his heavenly Father. Thanksgiving is therefore a debt—a debt that is left to every man's option whether he will pay or not.

But the Word of God reckons the unthankful among the highest and most enormous sinners. (Tim. 3:2.)

The Christian will more and more clearly understand, that constant giving of thanks to God is a priestly function which every believer must discharge; that this offering must be laid on the altar of every renewed heart, not only here below,—but through all eternity.

“And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for Thou hast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and makest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth.” (Rev. 5:9 ff.)

“All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The son and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven;
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore!”

Amen.

THINK ON THESE THINGS.

(O. M. NORLIE.)

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. 4:8.



This text is the motto of the Young People's League. It expresses, as it were, the ideals and program of the young people and explains in a measure the secret of their success in life.

Now then, what does the text say?

This text is a pearl of great price. It will surely not lose any of its value by our examining it again and again with reverent attention.

Finally, Brethren, Think! I.

In the first place, let us note that Paul calls the Congregation at Philippi, his brethren. That is, the whole Congregation—men and women, grown ups and children—was to him as a large family of brothers and sisters.

You remember, perhaps, how Paul had been called to preach the Gospel in Europe. At the time he was busily engaged in mission work over in Asia Minor. Then a vision appeared to him at night, and he heard the voice of a man saying: "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

At this he set sail for Europe, beginning his ministry at Philippi by preaching to a small band of women who had gathered by the riverside. At least one of these, a heathen woman by the name of Lydia, was then and there converted.

Over at Philippi Paul remained for a time and organized his first Congregation in Europe, a Congregation that ever afterwards was especially dear to him, giving him much help and comfort throughout the trials that later fell to his lot.

The Congregation at Philippi prospered, but suddenly the work was interrupted.

There was in that city a poor woman who had an evil spirit through which she could tell fortunes. This woman brought her masters much gain by her soothsaying. It happened that she heard Paul preach and was converted by him, and the result of this conversion was that she no longer told fortunes nor made gain for her masters. They, therefore, in anger laid hold on Paul, stirred up the whole city against him, dragged him before the rulers, who beat him with many stripes and threw him, without a formal trial, into prison, from which he was released by God.

I am not going to tell any more about what happened to Paul at Philippi, nor shall I tell about his many experiences after he left Philippi, except that now, at the time that the Epistle to the Philippians was being written, he was held a prisoner at Rome, his Congregation at Philippi having gotten wind of the fact that he was in prison, had sent a messenger to him with an appropriate gift. In answer to the kind greetings and gift of the Congregation Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians. In this letter he thanks them for the gift and expresses his joy in the Congregation, and explains to them how good it is to be right with God and one's fellowmen. In the eyes of Paul the congregation at Philippi as well as the whole Christian Church was just like one big family. He felt that he had a right to call believers brethren in Christ.

So can we also. So can also you young people in the Young People's Society. You are a band of brothers and sisters—real sons and daughters of your Heavenly Father. Remember that.

In the next place, let us note the word "Finally." The Apostle is about to sum up his thought, so as to conclude. He had written a rather long letter about the joy of the Christian in the Gospel fellowship and in God. He had added many warnings and admonitions urging them to be firm and united, unselfish and faithful, taking Jesus as their example.

Rejoice in the Lord Always.

"Rejoice in the Lord always," always be glad in the Lord and not be troubled. This is the main thought of the letter. This is his greeting to the dear brethren at Philippi, notwithstanding that he was a prisoner and was in great want. He pauses a moment at this point and tries to prepare his readers for the concluding remarks by using the word "Finally." It is worth while for us older people, and it is profitable for you younger ones, to pay attention to this world and the summary which follows upon it.

In the third place, let us look a moment at his command or appeal: "Think." This means that we ought to use our powers of thought; that we ought to be attentive and carefully consider what we do notice. In the First Article of our Creed we have learned that God has given us "body and soul, eyes, ears and all our members, our reason and all our senses." And in Psalm 139 David bears witness to the creative power of God in these words: "I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: wonderful are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." In this connection we should remember that the thought goes before the deed.

The thoughts may be evil which lead to evil deeds. Eve saw that the fruit was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise. She saw these things and meditated upon them before she took of the fruit thereof and ate.

"One secret thought
With evil fraught
Which in the heart was cherished,
Havoc of God's grace hath wrought,
And the soul hath perished.

One word from Hell
Cast its foul spell
On Adam with temptation;
So by one man all men fell
Under condemnation."

Cain went about envying and hating his brother, Abel, no doubt a long time before he rose up against him and slew him.

The thoughts may be holy which lead to holy deeds. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, filling her mind with the Words of life. Luther came to realize that he was a lost and condemned sinner, but that there was forgiveness of sins for him through faith in the crucified Savior. This thought filled his soul with courage and zeal. When Moffat was a young man about to leave his home, his mother said to him: "Promise me to read the Bible every day, my son." He did not like to make such a promise, and hesitated; but as he saw the tears coming to his mother's eyes, he answered: "Yes, by the help of God, I will." He kept his promise and, having thereby his mind occupied daily by the great thoughts of God, it is no wonder that he dedicated his life to the Lord's service; he became a missionary. These three thought about good deeds before they performed them.

This is always the case, that our thoughts, fair or foul, will determine our actions, good or bad; our actions are the result of our thinking. "Are you going to become a preacher?" a young man was asked by his pastor. "Well," said the youth, "I don't know. I have never given the matter a thought." The pastor replied: "You will surely never become a preacher if you do not think about it." Once there was a widow, who lived in the country, far away from the ocean, and yet, in spite of living inland, her boys one after the other went to sea. This she could not understand. One day while sitting alone in her room and meditating on this very question, her pastor dropped in. They conversed about her sons. Suddenly an idea came to the pastor as to why the boys had all decided the life of a sailor. "Look," said he, "on the wall over there hangs a large picture of a ship. This picture has hung there for many years, and the boys have gone in and out and stared at it. Through that constant looking the ship and the sea have been engraved on their hearts. That is the explanation." He was right.

We have been given eyes and ears and other organs of sense, reason and other powers of thought, in order to use them. God wants us to think, but not on everything. In this passage he says: "Think on these things."

In the fourth place, the text says: "Think on these things."

Not on everything, far from it. Only on what is good. Or, as the text has it: *"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

Give me, my Lord
A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine.



II. WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, HONORABLE, JUST, PURE, LOVELY.

(O. M. NORLIE.)

Blest are the **pure** in heart
For they shall see our God;
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.

But we must not be guilty of ignoring evil. Let us not deceive ourselves.

The world is full of lies. The Devil, who is the father of lies, came to Eve in the Garden of Eden with a cunning lie. Eve should not have listened to him, but she did, bringing woe upon mankind. So now there are many lies being uttered. Men say, for example, that there is no God, no sin, no punishment, no grace, no soul; that we come by evolution from the monkeys; that the Word of God can not be relied upon, and morals change with the customs. These and other lies should not be accepted. We should think about them as little as possible.

"Oh, watch and pray
My soul the way
Of safety lies before thee.
Lest thou shouldst be led astray
And the foe come o'er thee."

I know several young people who after having been carefully brought up in the Christian doctrine, have gone off to school where they have had to read infidel books, and sit at the feet of unbelieving teachers. Several of these have, through this influence, lost their childhood faith, while some have, through watching and praying, succeeded in clinging to the faith of their fathers.

There are many lies in the world, but there is also much that is true. There is absolute truth which never changes, which, like the Lord Himself, is the same today as yesterday, yea, for ever more. Two times two is four. *The Word of God is Truth.* "Till heaven and earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled."

"Use thou the Word
Of God, thy Lord;
All else is unavailing:
Every thought and passion guard
With this shield unfailing."

There are many things in this world which are not honorable. It is not honorable to be disloyal or disobedient to the powers that be, to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, to lie. And yet, if any one does any of these things in a very scandalous way, he is sure to have his dishonorable action recorded in the newspapers. The more dishonorable an act is, the more surely will it be recorded in the daily news. In the theaters and movies, in the novels and histories, we meet face to face with an inconceivable variety of dishonorable acts. The Lord does not want us to find pleasure in these.

What we see makes, as already stated, an impression on us and determines our acts. Said a teacher once at school: "When I go about and visit the students I can tell at a glance from the pictures on the walls what kind of people I have to deal with. In some of the rooms I find the most horrid cartoons and filthiest pictures plastered over the walls. I know what kind of thoughts occupy the minds of these students and what kind of acts to expect from them. In other rooms I find pictures neatly placed of relations and friends, scenes from nature and the Bible, such as Jesus on the cross. These pictures tell us what thoughts dwell within the soul of their owners and what kind of lives they lead."

There is much dishonorable in the world and also much that is honorable. The highest ideal of honor is the life of Jesus and the most beautiful of lives are those of men and women who have

looked to Him and have tried to be like Him in character and in deeds. Concerning these, the poet said:

"Lives of great men all remind us
That we can make our lives sublime."

By *just* we mean, what is *right*. We have courts of justice in the land whose object is to determine what is right. There is much injustice in the world. Some years back we had slavery. That was an unjust institution. Every day we hear of murder, thefts, cheating and the like. These things we can hardly escape noticing, but they should not be allowed to monopolize our thoughts.

On the contrary, whatsoever things are just shall occupy our mind. God is just and righteous altogether. Those who believe in Him, try by His help to be just. They practise the rule to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them. They do not ask an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but they love and forgive their enemies and pray for them that persecute them. One of these Christian noblemen wrote in the "United Lutheran" a few years ago that the policy of a Christian was not so much to be on the lookout that no one should cheat him, but rather to be on the lookout that he should not cheat anyone else.

A certain builder had been unfortunate, but one day a friend gave him a contract to build a large house. The builder to recoup his fortune put poor material into it throughout. When it was finished his friend told him that the house was his own. Imagine his dismay because he had been unjust. The builder, let us say, is you and I; the friend is God; the contract is our work in life, or perhaps only the thoughts we cherish. Let us think, but let our thoughts be just.

By pure we mean genuine and clean. The pure water is real water, not mixed with foreign elements. There is much impurity in the world. Impure acts, impure words, impure thoughts, impure desires.

While a teacher at a certain school was bending over, one of the boys played a trick on him, and when he straightened up he swore blue streaks. Evidently his heart was very impure, for out of the heart the mouth speaketh.

In Ps. 51 David prays for a clean heart. "Wash me," he says to the Lord, "and I shall be whiter than snow." In Ps. 19, David again prays: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

We must not let our minds be like sewers or sepulchres where there is reeking defilement and noxious impurity, but we must offer it to the Lord as a dwelling place, even as He has said: "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"

There is much ugliness in the world. Not so much in face and form, for handsome is as handsome does. Many people may be considered lovely, not because of their physical lines, but because of their beautiful deeds and kind words; but back of these lovely words and ways are lovely thoughts. *There is much that is beautiful in the world.* In nature, for example,—the mountains, valleys, rivers and plains. In works of art, there is sculpture and painting which appeal to the eye; instrumental and vocal music which charm the ear. There are people who are beautiful, both as to their appearance and their character; but the most beautiful things in the world are the thoughts of Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

O morning Star! how fair and bright
Thou beamest forth in truth and light;
O Sov'reign meek and lowly.

Amen.



III. WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT —VIRTUOUS AND PRAISEWORTHY.

(O. M. NORLIE.)

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide — — —

I have previously stated that most of the news in the secular newspapers are of bad report. Somebody has been killed, or committed suicide; it is the latest scandal, a new war, and the like. When you get a telegram your heart almost stands still until you have had a chance to read it, for fear that it will contain a bad report.

But there is much of good report to be told in this world. We have good news as well as bad news; and the best of good news is the Gospel, which so far the majority of men have not heard anything about, and the best of us understand only in part. The sum of it is that Christ died for sinners and can save to the uttermost; that He does not want the death of any sinner, but that he shall come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved forever. *We should think on these things!!*

"If There Be Any Virtue."

Some say that there is no sin, but there surely is. Sin is any transgression of the will of God, and unfortunately since sin came into the world, the heart of man has been desperately wicked.

There is much sin in and about us. This is most certainly true. And it is on account of this that Jesus Christ came down to earth and died for sinners.

And there is also much virtue. Jesus lived a virtuous life, obeying every commandment of the Law, exhibiting at its highest and best, every quality of human perfection and manhood. Those

who believe on Christ become Christ-minded and walk in His footsteps. The Christians are a class of virtuous people who are striving to obey the will of the Lord. They are not weaklings because they are virtuous, and they have often showed in their death as martyrs that a disciple is not above his master.

If There Be Any Praise.

When Christ was on earth, even though He was the King of Kings, "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as One from Whom men hide their faces He was despised."

On the other hand, the world has been obliged to honor, often in an extreme way, the rulers of this earth, the men of war and wealth and other distinction. The blood-thirsty Nero was worshipped even as a god. And yet all of these men who have been praised have sinned, and we all fall short of the glory of God.

We are, no doubt, permitted to praise what is good in men and to set them up as our examples and ideals. The Lord, however, is the only Person Who is altogether worthy of praise. Job tells us that at creation the sons of God sang together. Luke tells us that when the Savior was born, an angel choir came to earth and sang hymns of praise: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." John tells us that in the world to come there shall be a great angel choir which shall be joined by the multitude of the saints in one vast white throng, and these shall all sing in perfect harmony the new song about the Lamb that saved us by His blood. If there be any praise, think on these things.

Think on these things.

Yes, we certainly have something worth while to think about, and I am glad that the Young People's League has chosen this wonderful text as a motto. It is quite possible to think on these things, and I would here suggest just two ways in which this advice might be realized: The first is to have daily Bible readings; the second is to go to divine service regularly.

It should be a good Christian custom, to have daily devotion in the home, at the breakfast table, supper table and otherwise. I know a young man who used to carry a New Testament in his

pocket. Some times when he was out in the field he would let his horses rest when tired and, taking out his Testament, he would read and try to memorize a few passages and meditate upon them while he was at his work. There was no swearing at the horses, which, sad to say, is quite customary.

A second advice is to attend divine service as often as possible. The kings of the world send ambassadors to foreign countries who bring messages of good will and cooperation. In like manner the Heavenly King has sent to the people of this world His messengers.

God tells us that He is not our enemy, but our Friend; that He wishes to help us for this life and the life to come. He comes with a message of forgiveness and peace. The ministers of the Gospel are ambassadors from Heaven, that entreat us to be reconciled to God as though God Himself were speaking to us. To assemble on the Sabbath Day and at other times to hear His Word is one of the most sacred privileges that we have and gives us ample opportunity to think on these things. The Lord sends His Holy Spirit in and with His Word to make it living unto us, and it is our constant prayer that His Word to us may not have been spoken in vain.

Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.

"All our knowledge, sense and sight
Lie in deepest darkness shrouded;
Till Thy Spirit breaks our night
With the beams of truth unclouded."

Amen.



*WE WOULD SEE JESUS.

(O. V. EINARSEN.)

Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast: these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh and Philip, and they tell Jesus. And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. John 12: 20-23.



Happy Greeks who wished to see Jesus! Happy Philip who had a chance to bring the Greeks to Jesus.

Philip had himself found Jesus. Overwhelmed with joy he tells Nathanael about it and invites him to come and see.

From the time of this meeting with Jesus it was Philip's dearest endeavor to lead others to Him. With pleasure does he therefore comply with the wish of the Greeks, consults his fellow disciple Andrew and together do they come to Jesus, with this so dear an errand.

A more glorious task can man never get than to assist in leading others to Jesus. Every one, who has himself found him, will have a yearning to lead others to him.

A newly converted woman sat weeping at a religious meeting,—she could not get her friends away from the life in sin and to come with her to Jesus.

Yes, happy Greeks who wished to see Jesus, and happy every one to whom the need to see Jesus becomes sincere and urgent. That is the best desire one can have in his soul. To be able to see Jesus is the one solution to the great problems of life.

There are many things which are necessary to see. There are many beneficial things one might see. Young people demand to see, they need also to see. They attend schools, study and take examinations, but listen: Nothing is as important as to see Jesus.

But is it really possible for every one to see Him. Yes, God be praised! It is possible for every one to see Jesus. He has Himself made way for all sinners to come unto Him.

O that we all would see Him. See Him as John the Baptist saw Him. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. See Him like Peter, that we also fall down before Him, exclaiming: "Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" See Him as Paul saw Him, that we with him may say: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Then shall we walk in His footsteps, we shall be guided up unto Tabor. —Yea, home to the Kingdom of Glory where we throughout eternity shall see Him.

A mother asked her son to go to a certain Art Museum and see: "The Man of Galilee." The young man found nothing attractive about the picture and was about to leave the gallery when someone called his attention to the fact that he had not viewed the picture from the right position. After having taken the suggested position, he thus remained a long time. Finally he exclaimed enthusiastically: "If there is anything that I can do for Thee, Thou Man of Galilee, then count me along." It is blessed to be moved by the Man of Galilee. We shall then always be counted with Him. And if fortune should be against us, our health fail us, the food-dish be empty and privation stare us in the eyes, He would see us and know about our trouble. When we are tempted, when we stumble and fall and know of no means of help, we may count on Him.

There are no doubt many also in our day and in our surroundings who want to see Jesus. But do they know where to go to see Him? How about our daily life, does that point to Jesus? Shall others, by our life, be led to Jesus?

There are many in our dear country who need to see Him. And the innumerable hosts of the gentiles. Young friend, will you be a Philip? Remember, men are waiting to be guided to

Jesus. Say with the young man: "Is there anything that I can do for Thee, Thou Man of Gallilee? Then count me along."

There might be numerous things that hide Jesus from us; life ambitions and goals may be in the way; friends and companions may stand in the way. The crowd may block us the way. But we pray: "Lord Jesus let us always see Thee and help us to lead others to Thee!"

We would see Jesus: this is all we're needing;
Strength, joy, and willingness come with the sight;
We would see Jesus, dying, risen, pleading;
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night!

Amen.



ARE YOU GLAD?

(M. K. HARTMANN.)

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Phil. 4: 4.



One of God's greatest gifts to men is joy. The human heart is ever fond of and ever in search of joy. No matter what conditions may prevail, what circumstances may govern, or what the nature of our environment may be. We would all rejoice. The old, the weary, the sick, the sad, the poor—all would rejoice if they could.

To every human being is given the blessed privilege of rejoicing. Thank God for that. The sun in the heavens shines for all. Even so God would that all should rejoice. And when we are in the midst of sorrow, wrapped about by the mantle of gloom, the Lord would make our hearts glad. No burden is so heavy, no suffering so great, no sorrow so wretched, no soul so forsaken but that God in His Infinite Love can bring the sweet notes of joy.

But it is especially our youth that we have in mind when we think of joy. O youth! Heart longing for joy, soul craving enjoyment.

What opportunities in life to make the heart glad. The world lies at your feet and joy is knocking at the door. God wants our youth to rejoice.

Not all is joy that goes by the name of joy.

How many are not deceived in this respect? How much falsehood there is in this world! And *what a lie the world's joy is*. Jesus says "Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you; not

as the world giveth do I give." "Not as the world giveth do I give." Empty and hollow is the world's peace greeting, even so is its joy greeting.

The world has no abiding peace to give, it has no true joy to offer.

Beware, O youth, of the fool's joy: "Eat, drink and be merry." Beware of the power of mammon, let no youth who would be happy sell his soul for wealth, influence or fame. There is no true joy in this. Beware of that which is so readily accepted in our day as joy. The so-called popular dances, a majority of our "movies" and much of our literature are contaminated with evil and appeal to the baser elements in man. Beware of evil associations, these will exert a harmful influence upon you.

From many quarters we hear to-day the cry: Away from the church, away from the Bible, yes, if possible away from God, live a life free and unfettered by any moral restraint - and this is joy. What mockery! It is deception and falsehood. It is sorrow, misfortune and death.

Sin can not bring joy to any one.

God alone can bring joy.

And only that person can truly rejoice who rejoices in Him. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I say, rejoice." To the church of Christ has been entrusted all joy on earth. And it is only the Christian who can truly rejoice.

The Christian is the recipient of God's countless blessings. But every blessing that he receives is a cause for joy. The cause, supreme, for rejoicing, however, is the blessed knowledge that every believer is a child of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." "But rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

And do not forget that Christianity is joy.

To serve God, to follow Jesus is in itself a great joy. What matters, a cross to carry, a battle to fight, sacrifices to make of this and of that nature, a forward march against the enemies of God—all is joy in the end.

The Lord has given our young people glorious opportunities and occasions for joy.

No sorrows in life, but that joy in the Lord can overcome them all.

O youth! honor and serve thy Lord and God for Christ's sake, and all will be well with thee, and thou shall have joy, in time and eternity.

Send us Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord.

Thus may I rejoice to show
That I feel the love I owe;
Singing, till Thy face I see,
Of His love who first loved me.

Amen.



REJOICE!

(OLAF HOLEN.)

"Rejoice, O young man in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Ecclesiastes 11, 9.



There is a desire in the hearts of all people to rejoice. Especially is this desire strong in the hearts of the young.

They all have a longing in their soul to bask in the bright sunshine of joy.

How could it be otherwise?

The time of youth is with the glorious days of childhood, the most beautiful period of life.

It is *life's springtime*, the glad season, "when joy is stirring in the dancing blood, and nature calls us with a thousand songs to share her general feast."

And who does not want to rejoice then!!

God has placed this longing in your heart, my young friend. He wants you to rejoice:—

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth!"

Do not extinguish the flame that God Himself has lit in your heart! Do not banish the great vision from your soul!

"Walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes!"

But — — —

Notice this "but"!

It is *God's "BUT"* and therefore full of deep meaning.

Rejoice! Let thy heart cheer thee! Sing your songs of joy and happiness! Dream your beautiful dreams!

But—there is one thing you must not forget: — —

There comes a *day of reckoning*.

You will have to give *an account* of your life.

The days of youth with all their longings, joys, dreams and hopes shall be weighed in the balance of God.

“But *know* thou, that for *all these things*, God will bring thee *into judgment!*”

Your whole life shall be unfolded on that day in the pure light of eternity. Nothing shall be hid. Your actions, your words, your thoughts — — *all*, yes *all*, shall be revealed.

You may hide many things from the eyes of your closest friends and associates, but not from the eyes of God. There are no secrets in your life that He does not see. Your record is written in His book. He keeps *diary* of your life. And you shall face this diary on judgment day and it shall determine your *eternal destiny*.

God’s advice is therefore:—

Do *not banish the thoughts of judgment* from your mind. But let rather these thoughts be a *determining factor* in your life. Let them determine your joys, your longings, your dreams, your hopes, your amusements and your choice of friends.

Pass judgment over your life every day!

Place yourself in the light of God’s own Word, which is “quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebr. 4, 12).

Find *God’s will* in His word and *act according to it in all things*.

Let the Word of God be *the rule of your life*. But the Word of God can be the rule of your life only when you live a life of *FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS*.

“But,” you ask, “can I rejoice when I thus have to live with thoughts of judgment in my mind?”

Yes! The one who believes in Him, Who is the Life, Who shall “judge the living and the dead,” *will not be afraid* of the great day. For:—

"THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS." (Rom. 8. 1.)

Then,— and *only then*— when you live your life in fellowship with Christ and according to His will can you have the *true* and *lasting joy*.

For the joys of the world are wormeaten, empty and short-lived.

"The world passeth away and the lust thereof" (1 John 2. 17)

But the joy in Jesus is lasting.

"Rejoice in the Lord *alway!*"

That joy lasts through life's day and through the "glad eternal summer."

Therefore rejoice, young friend!

Rejoice in the Lord!

Then you have the true happiness in life.

And hope of eternal glory with God.

Faith feels the Spirit's kindling breath
In love and hope that conquer death;
Faith worketh hourly joy in God,
And trusts and blesses o'en the rod.

Amen.



THE RIGHT SOURCE OF CHEER.

(J. E. LINNER.)

Glory ye in His holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah; seek ye Jehovah and His strength; seek His face evermore. 1 Chron. 16: 10-11.

Blessed Spirit! Great Consoler!
Make our hearts Thy dwelling place;
Teach us, guide us, sanctify us,
And console us all our days.
Blessed Spirit!
Ever cheer us with Thy grace.



What we need, perhaps more than anything else, is good cheer. Without it we lack enthusiasm to perform our daily duty. Without it the intellect will grow dull, the heart heavy, the arm lame, the foot slow.

Our time has recognized this truth and offered a premium to any man who can advance the science of good cheer.

All kinds of movements have been introduced with this point in view. Bright mottoes are placed over the business man's desk. Sunshine clubs are being organized.

Emerson said: "Do not even mention evil in my presence."

But a prescription for a malady is not always a cure. It is not enough to advise a man to cheer up. He may reply: "Nothing is cheaper than advice." And it is true.

We may consider the receipt offered by "Christian Science," which informs us that pain, sorrow and sin are merely creatures of imagination.

But can we ignore facts like disease and death? All mankind would unite in singing praises to the man who by denying evil could abolish it. But this is not so easily done. Some one has said: "It is better not to know so much than to know so many things that are not so."

*There is only one that can cheer a sorrowful, sinful heart—
God, our Father in Christ Jesus!*

The few words in our text are like a sunshine which illumines every dark valley of life and shows the hidden glory in God's presence.

God is the home of harmony. The undying source of rest and peace. Return to Him and you will acquire that peace that passeth all understanding.

Christ said: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Look up to Him, though the noblest of us all, suffered and endured patiently and bravely because He knew He was fulfilling His Father's will and redeeming a "weary and heavy-laden" world.

We can therefore say with the beautiful words of our text:

"Glory ye in His holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah; seek ye Jehovah and His strength; seek His face evermore."

Sunshine spread and bring release
Where they need both light and peace—
Blend sweet harmony, today
On your way —

Sunshine spread wher'ere you roam
Salem calls the pilgrim home
Bring to men God's blessed grace
Heavenly rays —

Amen.



THE DAY OF RECKONING.

(H. N. BAKKE.)

Now after a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. Math. 25:19.



There are many important things in life. And the danger in our times is that "*The One Thing Needful*" is just one of the many, if it is given serious consideration at all.

Now, God has given to us who are young a great many gifts: the rich heritage of the past, the opportunities of the present, the matchless promises for the future. All of these taken together constitute a divine call to service in God's kingdom, according to God's will. Responding, wholeheartedly, to this call is the highest privilege and duty of youth.

God says to every young man or woman: "Give me thine heart." *The* question of life is: Am I a Christian? Am I free from the guilt and mastery of sin? Does Jesus live in me, and I in Him? Is it my highest endeavor and my keenest pleasure to do the will of God?

If these questions can be answered with an honest "yes," then you do not need to go through life a questioning, cowering slave in fear of the judgment to come. For in your case the final decision will be: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Alas, youth does not always think of the day of reckoning. That day seems so far away. Why be concerned about it—yet? Complete surrender to the Lord seems to be a great hindrance to the enjoyment of life.

Youth wants to be free. One does not want to turn completely away from God, nor yield to Him. A miserable compromise results: Yielding a little here and there, without yielding all. Is this the proper way to live? Is this the same way to prepare for the day of reckoning?

Some time the great decision shall take place. One day—later on—will be more convenient;—then they shall step "over the line." *God says: Now.* Man says: Not now, later. To many, to most people reasoning thus, the years bring only increasing difficulties and spiritual hardness. What a pitiful sight to see old people stalk about, waiting for the "end," without the joy of salvation. Some are cold and careless; some are secure in their own self-righteousness; others are outright hostile. What a sad, but striking, commentary on the danger of postponement.

Even if people are saved after a long life in sin, even if the soul is saved, the long life has been in vain. Their service has not been out and out for God, but for self.

We praise God because He will and can save even in the last moments of life. But we do not for a moment desire to comfort the *young* with this thought. *Let not the robes of the cross be your ideal, dear young people!* Rather let the example of old Polycarp inspire you to right action.

A day of reckoning is coming. Let this truth become very prominent to our youth. God gives us life, time, gifts, opportunities. These form a mighty obligation: To live in God. To live *for* God. Through all their days.

Shall we receive God's gifts and use them in the devil's service, in opposition to God? Friend, all the gifts of God are misused, if His choicest gift, His Son Jesus Christ, does not become our personal Savior. To be right with God, to be ready for the day of reckoning, I must be able, in truth, to say: Jesus is my Savior. No young man or woman can develop rightly without Christ as the dominant power of the heart.

True Christianity is born and developed by the Means of Grace—the Word and the Sacraments. Then, let us who would be glad, on the day of settlement, use these means prayerfully and diligently.

Jesus says: "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12, 48. Well, then we know according to what rule reckoning shall be conducted. And we thank God for such knowledge.

We know, too, from God's Word and from human experience, that the highest joy does not consist in evading God and fearing His wrath. But in willing obedience and constant yielding to Him.

Thus we come to know Him as our Father. We become eager to make use of all our talents in such a way that His name is glorified. Can you think of a better way to prepare for the final reckoning?

And such preparation will give to youth true happiness and development along the right lines.

Give, thou, thy youth to God,
With all its budding love;
Send up thy opening heart to Him,
Fix it on One above.

Be early wise for heaven,
Choose, then, the narrow way;
The gate is straight, the road is rough,
But it will end in day.

Amen.



LACKING THE ONE ESSENTIAL THING.

(H. A. OKDALE.)

Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. Mark 10: 21-22.

Lord Jesus give us grace to accept eternal life as revealed in Thy Word, and offered in Thee the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.



No one ever ran in a more hopeful direction, nor knelt at a better Master's feet, nor ever asked a more far reaching, vital, soul enriching question. Nor did any one ever receive a franker, clearer, with more saving grace filled answer, than did the young ruler in our text.

Jesus says there is a treasure in heaven, a kingdom, an eternal life to be had for every human being. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32.

Thus the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus has brought the cleansing, healing and saving grace of God to sustained, sinsick, and lost humanity. And this grace is extended to you and to me, dear reader, through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments.

Hence Jesus the Savior of the world, your Savior, is through the words of our text meeting you at your altar of worship.

As the young Ruler, you are drawn to this hour of devotion by the gentle dew of heavenly grace. It comes to you from the revelation of God the Father, and His will with you, as seen in the Good Master Christ Jesus.

This grace has brought you to Christ with a question: Have you in your heart a desire to get more knowledge concerning Christ and to receive more power with which to get a firm grasp on eternal life?

But observe how near this young man was to eternal life, and to have the *one question of his soul answered*. He was kneeling at the feet of Jesus. Christ says, "I and the resurrection and the Life." John 11, 25. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6, 37.

This young Ruler moved upward, he reached it with his hands, and did hear Christ's life-giving words, "Go" and "Come." See 1st John 1, 1.

But coming to Christ with the soul's deepest need and desire, seeing life, handling life, and hearing life's directing words is *not enough*.

Thus far God's grace succeeded in bringing the young man of our text. Thus far you may merely be this now while you read devotion. But the all important part, perhaps, still remains?

You must abide with Christ and His Word. Wait, look, yes demand an answer to your soul's question concerning eternal life on the basis of God's promises. Christ will answer, and in the answer give grace to accept is as final and fully satisfactory.

Have you accepted?

Or are you ready to accept Christ's answer to your soul's cry for eternal life?

It is an answer full with divine grace, light, and power. It contains a message of life, of peace, of guidance, and of consecrated service.

The treasure in heaven, eternal life, is conditioned on selling out what we have on earth, not in selling our dependence, making us serve those who are in need.

We must part away our treasure and empty our heart of it, so

that it no longer is a treasure to our heart. It must no longer direct our life in its attitude toward God's will concerning self and our fellow men.

We must accept God's call in Christ to follow Him, or lose the treasure. The treasure in heaven and Christ's call to follow Him are inseparable. If you reject the call you will lose the treasure. **Accepting it you have the treasure.**

Here, dear reader, we have come to the parting of the ways.

This is the hard saying that has caused many, like the young ruler, to turn back and no longer follow Christ. To part with Christ here makes the soul sad. Those who leave Him here go away sorrowing in death unto eternal death, having rejected the call to life.

God grant us grace to face the demands of Christ's answer to our soul's question. To face them until through repentance from sin we are by faith enabled to see that our soul's greatest need is Christ Jesus our Savior. That He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He that hath the Son hath life. Yes, cleave to Christ until we are given power to become the children of God, and thus inherit eternal life, have accepted our call, received our mission to follow Christ, and to say with all we have and all we are: **Not as I will, but at Thou wilt.**

Almighty God, by Thy infinite grace enable us to hear and accept the call of Thy beloved Son. To cease to love the world and the things of the world. And to take up the cross and follow in our Master's footsteps faithfully until death.

God calling yet shall I not hear?
Earth's pleasures shall I still hold dear?
Shall life's swift passing years all fly
And still my soul in slumbers lie?

God calling yet! I cannot stay;
My heart I yield without delay;
Vain world, farewell! from thee I part;
The voice of God has reached my heart!

Amen.

LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

(CARL M. WESWIG.)

Upon this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go; Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God.



There comes a time when we must decide for or against Jesus. He will not let us have peace with a mere nominal adherence to Him. Nor will His enemies let us alone. We must either be for Him or against Him. We must make an open, honest decision either for or against Him. And *when Jesus tests His disciples, many turn back, but some remain faithful.*

Not all who begin the Christian life remain faithful unto the end.

Many fall by the wayside.

They turn away from their Lord. They become offended when He offers them their choice of accepting Him as the source of all life or leaving Him. They take offense at His Word. They are satisfied with a little Sunday entertainment in church; but He demands a new heart. They want a pleasant message, which shall not disturb their life; He demands contrition in the heart and repentance from sin, He was wounded for their transgressions, but they refuse to accept His atonement for their sins. For various reasons they want to be church people; but they refuse to have their names enrolled in the church invisible. *They will not believe in Him.*

Now if we go away from Jesus we must go to someone else. In religion there is no middle ground of indecision. All human beings must have a religion. This religion must be centered in a person. *Nothing else will do.* That is the reason that Confucius, Mohammed, and other false prophets have had such a large influence in this world. They are at least persons.

But religion in order to adequately satisfy our heart's longings must at least do three things for us. It must free us from the burden of sin. It must give us a new power which shall make us superior to our environment and the changing vicissitudes of time. And it must deliver us from the fear of death and give us an eternal hope.

Can any substitute for Christ fulfil these conditions? Plainly the answer is,—no. No other religion in the world can in any measure free us from sin and give us a hope of eternal life. The world offers its cup of pleasure with the inevitable dregs of death. The worldly cries out: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die! The world's wise men say: Only one thing we know, that we know nothing. Oh what folly to forsake the only sure and proven way of salvation!

Some remain faithful to Him. It is not because of any compulsion, except that of love. They have heard from Him the words of eternal life. They are found in Him alone. The absoluteness and exclusiveness of Christ is not the invention of His disciples, but His own clear statement. He alone has the Word of eternal life.

Our certainty in our salvation is founded on this Word. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but it shall remain. And it is the Word of eternal life. In it alone is a remedy for sin, an antidote for death; and a certainty of life beyond the grave. In Jesus Christ the love of God was made manifest and we learned to call Him our Father.

For Jesus is the Holy One of God. He is the Messiah sent by God. He was sanctified and set apart by God himself as the Savior of mankind. He was guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and higher than the heavens. Sanctified, consecrated and sent into the world by the Father.

He it is who asks: *Would ye also go away?* Let the answer be *no*. We have believed in Him and know Him. He has never failed nor disappointed us. In Him alone will we put our trust. And once more will we give absolute allegiance to Him alone.

Let me be Thine forever,
My gracious God and Lord,
May I forsake Thee never,
Nor wander from Thy word:
Preserve me from the wages
Of error and distrust,
And I shall sing Thy praises
Forever with the just.

Amen.



THE WAY OF SALVATION.

(I. L. LASSESON.)

And (he) brought them out and said: Sirs? What must I do to be saved? Acts 16:30.



Salvation is the question of importance for everybody. It settles a person's woe or weal for time and eternity. It should be the first question on our life's program; seriously considered, weighed and settled in the light of time and eternity. The person who has arranged the affair of salvation, has made the foundation for life-success now and forever. From this it

is evident that the question of salvation concerns the young people especially.

In life's springtime is the proper time to sow the seed that shall grow and bear fruit in manhood and old age. A young person, whose life is founded on true piety, has a greater prospect toward success and advancement, than he, whose conversion takes place in later years.

The text makes it plain, that the question of salvation is a personal one. Nobody can volunteer to settle this question for us. It is your and my heart relation to God, that must be decided. To be convinced that God is near, is the serious fact called forth out of this question. The prison-keeper in Phillippi, realized God's holy presence, by the miracle God performed, when the prison doors opened, and the prisoner's bands were loosed. Then he became conscious of the fact, that he himself stood face to face with God, as a prisoner bound in chains of sin, doomed to die.

Notice, however, he did not do as many, especially young people,

do. He did not attempt to run away from God. He stopped and sought advice. What a blessing that Paul and Silas were so near at hand. Some good people are ashamed to be seen in company with older Christians. By this sign they frankly admit that they are ashamed of God, and not in want of salvation.

Consider, young friend, you can not escape from the presence of God just because you missed His once-call. One day you shall have to meet Him. Then, perhaps, not as your *Savior*, but as your *Judge*. Do as this jail-keeper and Saul of Tarsus did: Let God know your *innermost* troubles at once, and if necessary, speak about them to a *revival* Christian. Do not be ashamed to own up to the fact that you are an *irresolute* and in need of guidance and instruction.

This was the decisive moment for the prison-keeper. His salvation depended upon how he used the opportunity at hand. He was lost and he acknowledged it, but on the other hand, he did not know how he should be saved. For this reason he sought advice. He got it, took it and followed it man. He was honest and obedient toward the Holy Spirit, and all who would be saved, must do likewise.

God's advice was single and straightforward. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*." Salvation was ready, waiting to be accepted, and this he did. When Paul talked to him about what Jesus had done, he believed it to be something Jesus had done for him. Being he was a heathen, he was baptized together with his whole family. Do you see how convenient it is to become saved, when you let God determine?

Not only was *he* saved, but also his whole family. When we possess a personal salvation, we can be a blessing unto others.

Oftentime a young person hesitates about becoming a Christian, because he is afraid of being the *only one*. Perhaps you are a hindrance to others. If you, who is the captain of your company in a life of sin, would turn to Jesus and be saved, your comrades might be persuaded to follow your good example. Like this jail-keeper, you, too, would become a tool in the hands of God to save others.

That is just the reason why God spared your life, endowed

and the same is true of the other two, and you will be surprised to find that the same is true of the other two.

It is a very common mistake to suppose that the same is true of the other two. It is not true. It is a very common mistake to suppose that the same is true of the other two.

It is a very common mistake to suppose that the same is true of the other two.

It is a very common mistake to suppose that the same is true of the other two.

Amos



*THE BLOTTING OUT TRESPASSES.

(L. LANGEHAUG.)

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins. Is. 43, 25.

Dear Lord God, give us the light from Thy Holy Spirit, that we, from Thy word may receive a true acknowledgement of sin and grace, Amen.



Dear young friend! Today the Lord our God approaches us with one of the most glorious truths in the whole Bible. For this word speaks of the forgiveness of sins, which is the most important theme in all our Christian doctrine.

If we have the forgiveness of sins, we have all we need for time and eternity. If we do not have it, we are the most unhappy and wretched of all creatures. No matter what we are otherwise, we will not derive any spiritual and lasting benefit to ourselves.

If we do not have the forgiveness of sins we are under the judgment and God's curse, both in time and eternity.

Think, what a fearful condition for all those who do not own this wonderful gift of grace. You may live a decent, moral life. Have obtained much knowledge—yes, even in the Word of God. Be a busy worker in the congregation: teacher in Sunday school—member of the choir in the congregation and the young people's society and still be lost.

The forgiveness of sins you must have, if you shall enter into heaven; for there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean. Rev. 21, 27.

Then the question remains: How shall I obtain and be assured of the forgiveness of sins? Jesus says that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations. Here we see that forgiveness of sins is closely connected with conversion. For those who have fallen away from God there must be a true conversion before they can be God's children again.

Conversion begins with awakening, not only a stirring, but a real and actual awakening so that our deepest acknowledgment is aroused. You feel and acknowledge that you are lost, and your greatest desire is to find peace with God. You read God's Word and pray to God. You try to put off sinning and do the best you can. But matters only get much worse—no peace. It gets to be quite impossible. You are giving up. "There is no use in trying any more. I am lost!"

That is true. You are lost. But the fact that you feel your lost condition in this way is in truth an act of grace done in your heart by God's Spirit; for no one else can bring such a feeling of sin and quiet into the soul.

But wait now, and listen to what the Lord says to you: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." *For mine own sake.* Think of that! For His own sake. Not for anything in you, but for His own mercy's sake. For the sake of Jesus Christ, who with His own blood atoned for the sin of the world—your sin, too.

Jesus Himself says: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Math. 9, 13. And in John 7, 37 He says: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." You that have a longing for salvation, come and drink of the fountain of grace! "Lay hold of the life eternal where unto thou wast called." 1 Tim. 6, 12.

But to lay hold of the life eternal is to lay hold of Christ, accept Him as your personal Savior. It is to believe that your sins are forgiven you for His sake.

Do not let your blind reason, or your emotions lead you astray: for the Word of God weighs a thousand times more than all that we have. "Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand," is the song of one man. "Behold the Lamb of God that

taketh away the sin of the world" are the words of John. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest," says Jesus.

Do you want to accept this grace? Yes, I do, you say, and throw yourself in God's open arms of grace. There you are, as the prodigal son, in the Father's arms. Now you have felt peace and have begun to love God. Those pleasant emotions that you had vainly been waiting for so long, have now come all of themselves, as a fruit of faith and not as you thought, that faith was a fruit of the emotions. It was not the way you thought it should go, but as God says in His Word. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

One thing more: "And I will not remember thy sins." Grace for grace! My sins that have caused me so much misery and with which I have grieved the dear Lord, shall be forgotten for ever.

O, what love! God be praised, Halleluja!

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Amen.



*THE JOY OF SALVATION.

(A. H. EIKJARUD.)

But it was meet to make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found. Luke 15, 32.

Lord God, let Thy Word reach my heart and be a blessing to me. Amen.



To be merry and glad we surely do desire. Not only a few of us, but everyone. The contents of the longings and aspirations of the human heart can be expressed in the words: joy, happiness. But especially is this true of the young. The demand for happiness is greatest in youth. How pitiful it is, that so many do not find it, because they seek it away from God.

There the prodigal son thought he would find it, but was so dreadfully disappointed and so extremely unhappy and lost. Young friend, was this probably what happened to you? You allowed yourself to be lured and led into joys that drew your heart away from God.

But you found no joy, you lost it, the joy of the heart, the joy of a good conscience. To let oneself be lured away from God means death to the entire life of the soul.

Has your heavenly Father been permitted to lead you back, home to Himself again as His child? Then the memory of your life in sin, away from God, fills you with grief and terror. But then, too, you know what living jubilant joy is: to be a child of God for Jesus sake.

Happy are you, young friend, who belong to God! You who were lost, but have been found again. And especially you who

have been preserved in your baptismal grace all your youth with God.

Wonderful joy! The deepest and richest on earth. The joy in God, at being a saved sinner, grows more and more into a mutual joy *with* God in all that the love of God embraces.

But God's great joy is that one lost in sin, finds his way back to the grace and blissful peace of the Fatherhome.

"There is joy in heaven over one sinner, that repenteth more than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance." The believers in the Lord on earth take part in this heavenly joy. Think: a brother, who was dead, is living! A brother, who was lost, is found by the shepherd of the soul, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sorrow and anxiety have disappeared. Joy is blended with that of the heavenly hosts. Then the child of God feels the beginnings of the jubilee joy which will be experienced on the day of the great gathering in heaven.

Then there will ring through the heavenly halls—a song full of praises never heard of.

Are you acquainted with this joy, young friend, over a brother, a sister, who has found the peace with God?

A friend, perhaps, whom you were permitted to be an instrument in God's hand, to lead back to the Father's home?

What a grace, what a joy! Take these words to heart: Never forget them. Beautiful words of the Father to his son! "*Let us make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.*"

A serious warning is implied in these words. Take care of your life of faith, so that your joy in God will not be cooled and die in your heart! That was what happened to the elder son. He felt himself pushed aside and grew cold, when the lost brother had come home, while the Father and all the others in the home rejoiced with gladness.

What was the matter with him! He was no longer a child, his love to the Father, and consequently to the brother was cold. Poor boy! Now he falls into eternal loss and death. —

Let us pray for all that they should that such may not happen.

Let us pray for all that they should that such may not happen.

Let us pray for all that they should that such may not happen.

Let us pray for all that they should that such may not happen.

Amen



*BORN IN ZION.

(J. B. A. DALE.)

Yea, of Zion it shall be said, this one and that one was born in her; and the Most High Himself will establish her. Jehovah will count when He writeth up the peoples. This one was born there. Selah. They that sing as well as they that dance shall say: All my fountains are in Thee. Ps. 87: 5-7.



It is an honor to be born in a respectable home, where parents and children live together in love. And as a child in such a home loves the place in which he was born and where he lived the happy days of childhood and youth, so also Jerusalem was the fondest place on earth to the believing Israelite. There he spent his happiest hours in the temple of God and sang:

How amiable are thy tabernacles. O Jehovah of hosts! For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand

When the people assembled to worship on Mount Zion, they had festivities with song and music for several days. These spirited services had such an influence on the neighboring gentile (v. 4) that even they came up to Zion, became believers and sang as one great chorus: "Glorious things are spoken of Thee, O city of God. All my fountains are in Thee. This one and that one was born in her."

But the "birthday" was celebrated most gloriously on the day of Pentecost, when the Lord's counting showed up three thousand souls of all nations who were regenerated on that day. Each one of these was added to the congregation, anointed with the Spirit of Baptism and Fire and was well established against all the power of the immortal foe.

In this congregation we also have our spiritual home; because there we are born again and made the children of God through baptism and the Word.

There we learned to know God as our Father. And there we may always remain in an intimate relation to Him as His children by faith through Jesus Christ, our Lord. There it is good to be because it is a blessed thing to be a child of God.

Thine for ever! O how blest
They who find in Thee their rest!
Savior, Guardian, heavenly Friend,
O defend us to the end.

Beautiful days of childhood! Thine memories awaken longings—home-longings upward to God!

But what about the days of Youth? Are they not always pleasing? Yes, indeed, but especially for those who love the Lord and His believing church. It is a pleasure to them to attend Christian services in the house of the Lord with relatives and friends and thus keep the Sabbath day holy. It is a solemn and festive moment for them when the church bells chime their music in the country and town, calling souls together for holy festivity, and when the hymns raise in stately tones from the many voices in the church. And when the Word moves the minds and hearts with such a persuasive power that we unconditionally must acknowledge that the Spirit of Lord is mightily present to save the souls.

Happy are you who can then say: Here am I born to life in God! Here is my spiritual home! Together with your friends you can enjoy yourself at Young People's meetings, prayer meetings, in the Bible class, in mission activity and charity service to which you are all bound in one mind with mutual problems and interest. For in the church of God we do not live for self only. Selfishness is a characteristic of the world. But a true Christian lives for others too, those at home and abroad, among Jews, heathens and other Christians, because we desire to have them with us and sing: All my fountains are in Thee!

Behold, this is a Christian, God-pleasing friendship, brother-

and interrelation in the congregation. Such a congregation has life and strength in it and young people of whom it can be said: "Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power in holy array: Out of the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." God bless the young!

But now it is important to be preserved in this communion with God and the congregation. For a Christian is always exposed to temptations and fall. And they are not the least to be feared while one is young. Therefore Jesus says: "Teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you."

The main thing in this command is to "renounce and believe." This we also promised on the day of confirmation, but perhaps we did not possess strength to remain steadfast. But God gives us strength through the Word and the Lord's Supper. Use, therefore, often these blessed Means of Grace through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, trusting that God is powerful enough to keep you from falling.

"Let not your heart be troubled," says Jesus, believe in God, believe also in Me! "I go to prepare a place for you in my Father's mansions." In the celestial Zion, the new Jerusalem, where the Most High shall count when the peoples of all earthly ages and ages are written up. Then the redeemed shall jubilate in their anthem of victory: "Halleluja! Salvation and honor and praise and power belongeth to the Lord our God throughout all eternity."

Friends, may we meet at the festivities in heaven! Then at last we shall sing:

With joy we depart for our fatherland,
Where God our Father is dwelling,
Where ready for us His mansions stand,
Where heaven with praise is swelling,
And there we shall walk in endless light,
With blest ones His praise forthtelling.

Amen.

TO SAVE A SOUL FROM DEATH.

(T. S. KOLSTE.)

"My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, and one converteth him; let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." James 5: 19, 20. — R. V.



My Christian friend, do you know of a more glorious name than the name of Jesus Christ? No, indeed, because there is no more glorious name under heaven, and this because none other but Jesus Christ has accomplished a greater or a better work, as He alone "has redeemed us, lost and condemned creatures, secured and delivered us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that we might be His, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns to all eternity."

Now, beloved, shall not the same mind be in us as was in Christ Jesus, when He gave Himself as a ransom for us, when He came not to be served, but to serve? Must we not in like manner become servants in order to turn our fellow-beings from the influence of satan and to God?

A countless number of our fellow men "does err from the truth," and many of those that we know and who are very dear to us may to day be reckoned among these most unfortunate ones.

But now, what are our duties in respect to these? May we

despise or shun them or shall we treat them according to their own merits? Be it far from it. If we only look to Jesus, our Savior, and learn of Him, how He treated the prodigal, we will understand, what is to be done by us to lead the erring back to God, our heavenly Father.

Such work is indeed to manifest true brotherly love toward one another and to put in practice "pure religion." By such a service, my friend, you will obtain the greatest gain—you will save a soul from death.

A soul! Think a moment, of what a worth the soul is. If you could gain thousands of worlds, such gain could in no wise balance the value of a single soul. Shall it not then, be fully worth our while to do our very best to turn an erring soul back to the way of truth?

The soul is indeed precious, but in the work for its salvation you shall most certainly experience the difficulties of "converting a sinner from the error of his way."

A soul that has fallen into error is not, as a rule easily led back to the way of truth. Whether, however, you may cherish any hope of saving such an erring sinner, depends in a large measure upon how much you are able to love the person whom you wish to bring back to God.

In such effort ever remember that the good Shepherd sought the lost sheep *until he found it*. The question is now, beloved, how long and how far you want to go in order that you may win back to the way of truth one, even one "among you," i. e., one who has once been a believer, but is now in error or fallen from grace.

"Will not seven efforts suffice?" we ask, when we grow weary in our pastoral service. It seems to me that I may soon have done enough or even more than my Christian duty towards a certain crooked, perverse, yea even, as it may sometimes appear, a hardened sinner.

Will not the seven efforts that are done with much sacrifice and even humiliation on my part, suffice, am I not to be excused from further duty in this particular instance? "No," says our Savior, "not seven times, but seventy times seven!" because such

effort means *to save a soul from death*. "Go again, make a new attempt, try a new and better way," says the spirit of our Savior.

How often has not a hero of war made repeated attempts to gain his goal? Have repeated failures thwarted his plans and purposes? Not in the least. Far from it. But the defeats have rather kindled his spirit to renewed efforts, until they have been crowned with the laurels of victory.

Still, such a victor has only obtained earthly gains, but you, my Christian friend, you are to gain a sinner "from the error of his way" and "to save a soul from death!"

Such shall be your gain, if you will continue in the name of Jesus to pray and to work and not grow weary in the blessed work of saving souls. Let the love of Christ constrain you to continue to work for prodigal souls until the true Shepherd Himself will relieve you by a blessed death and you be rewarded by the crown of life. . . .

It matters not who it may be, that has wandered away "from the truth," he is not easy to get back.

Such a conversion can only be obtained by the gracious act of God. But He has chosen you, believing soul, for this task to be His servant. You and none else, but you shall go His errands that the good Shepherd through your agency may search for the lost sheep, until it be found.

If you then, my friend, through your Christian work become a means in God's hands to a sinner's salvation, "what a multitude of sins will not God then cover"! A soul saved, what a gain!

"Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." I Tim. 4:16.

Once on the dreary mountain
 We wandered far and wide,
 Far from the cleansing fountain,
 Far from the pierced side;
 But Jesus sought and found us,
 And washed our guilt away;
 With cords of love He bound us
 To be His own for aye.

Amen.

THE FOURLEAF CLOVER OF REDEMPTION.

(M. CASPER JOHNSHOY.)

Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Psalm 85, 10.



These words bring a glorious promise to our hearts. And this promise comes as an answer to the cry of anguish: Show us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation,—a cry of anguish sent up by the congregation of God.

But it was Jehovah's will that Israel should first learn to know their condition. They were in distress, not because God was unwilling or unable to help them. No, says Isaiah, our own iniquities have separated between us and our God. Our sins have hid His face from us, that He will not hear. Our hands are defiled with blood, and our fingers with iniquity; our lips have spoken lies, and our tongue hath uttered perverseness.

The way of peace we know not. We grope for the wall like the blind. Our transgressions are multiplied before God, and our sins testify against us. We know our iniquities, that we have departed from the Lord, and many times have we spoken lies against God. We can not cover ourselves with our own works for justice standeth afar off, and truth is far from us.

Such was the condition. The Lord saw it, and it displeased Him, that there was no judgment among the children of men. The Lord saw also that man could never save himself from this condition. Therefore, He gave His promise: "The Redeemer shall come to Zion."

And this Redeemer is Jesus, our Savior. Jesus Christ brings salvation in His blessed person: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." And when the Savior came to the world, this glorious promise was fulfilled. Then, truly, "truth sprang out of the earth," and righteousness looking down from heaven found in Jesus Christ all its demands fulfilled: a holy conception and birth; perfect obedience; and an innocent death; there was no guile in Him. He was sinless and pure in body and soul.

In Jesus Christ mercy and truth met together. In Him righteousness and peace have been reconciled through the atonement which He brought. And this could take place only through Christ, in whom, through the tender mercies of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us.

This Christ was made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And He is our peace.

Such was God's answer to the cry of anguish sent up by the people of Israel: Show us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation.

God's chosen people were to experience that, through all the ways of the Lord, mercy and truth should meet together, and that among His faithful children righteousness and peace should be inseparable. Heaven and earth should again be united in His eternal love. The four angels, mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace, the complete glory of God, should again dwell in the land. His salvation is nigh unto all them that fear Him. The Lord shall speak peace unto His people.

This promise comes also to every individual member of the congregation of God. But not all men accept the promise of grace. The Lord must often bring us through many a bitter experience in order to prepare our hearts for the truth. Through adversity, sorrow, or sickness, He turns our thoughts upon the uncertainty of life and awakens in us a desire for help.

But the Lord desires us to know ourselves.

Therefore, as we pray for the fulness of the gift of the Spirit, we often are made to feel the fulness of the measure of our sin.

He desires us to be converted from a vessel of wrath, fitted unto destruction, filled with all uncleanness, vanity, and evil.

When we see ourselves in such a condition, we feel that we have rather *deserved* eternal condemnation and punishment, than to be given a share in the precious grace of God. Then the cry of anguish re-echoes in our soul. Remember, then, dear friend, that this is also the work of the Holy Spirit in us,—that He thus convinces our hearts concerning sin.

Let us then with Israel remind the Lord of our former days, when He looked with pleasure upon us; when He took us into His loving arms, called us to His name in holy baptism, blotted out our iniquities, and forgave us all our sins. Then He removed His wrath from us and let His anger turn away.

Through His mercy and truth God has again established peace with us. Through conversion and faith in the righteousness and merits of Christ our sorrowing hearts are filled with His peace. Thus righteousness and peace are made to meet in our soul,—a foretaste of the blessed joy and peace of eternal life. Truly, the Lord has blessed us beyond measure.

May God in His grace grant that also I may have this blessed experience on my soul. God grant that I may walk in righteousness before the countenance of my Lord; teach me Thy way, O Lord, that I may follow Thee as a loving child, and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself unto death for me.

Here I'd rest, forever viewing
Mercy poured in streams of blood;
Precious drops, my soul bedewing,
Lead and claim my peace with God.

Amen.

JESUS OUR PEACE.

(JOHN RESNICK.)

"For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Ephes. 2:14.



There should be no difference between man and man. We are all sinners, and we are all reconciled to God through Christ, who gave His life for us.

Nevertheless, for centuries there has been a wall of partition separating races and peoples, and that is enmity. The Jew hates the Gentile, the Greek hates the barbarian, and nations incessantly fight each other.

Why?

Because men do not accept Christ as their Peace. They forget that He is the Prince of Peace. Who is the rightful ruler of man, and Who alone is able to give peace to the restless and turbulent heart of man.

Young friend! You have an intense longing for peace, a desire for a clean conscience. You wish to be able to look into the face of God and man without a blush. Draw nigh unto the Cross, and let your soul be sprinkled with the cleansing blood of Christ.

Do not stand at a distance where the blood of the Lamb cannot reach you. Do not erect a parting wall of enmity. Christ offers you His peace. Christ breaks down enmity. That is just what Jesus did. By His death on the cross He broke down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. All may come to Him and be saved. He made of the two one. There is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ; but one Christian Church, with Christ at its head.

Is there yet any hatred in your heart? Is there a wall of partition between you and the Church of Christ? Perhaps you are not yet reconciled to God? Is it the cross you fear? Is it the blood of Christ that is repulsive to you? Beloved, this blood was shed for *you*, it was through love to you that His blood was poured out, for the salvation of your soul. Why are you afraid to draw nigh unto the fountain and drink? Why do so many of our young people stay away from the Lord's Supper? Why do they despise the Means of Grace? Why do they run after the pleasures of this world to the detriment of their immortal souls?

Are you yearning for peace? Come to Jesus, He is our Peace. His heart goes out to you, His life blood is yours. Do not trample the blood under your feet, as Israel did of old. Do not despise the Cross as the Greeks did. Jesus is your peace, and with His stripes you are healed.

Blessed is he in whose heart Jesus through His blood reigns supreme, so that He can wipe out all feelings of enmity. If you have Christ's image in your heart you cannot hate.

The writer is himself a Hebrew Christian. There was a time in my life when hatred to Christ and His Church reigned supreme in my heart. There was a wall of partition which separated me from God's true children. I wandered from place to place like so many of my Jewish brethren, but could not find peace for my soul. I despised the precious blood of Christ and eluded the Cross. I was young then, like yourself, my young reader.

But ultimately I could resist the Word no longer. I found it "hard to kick against the pricks." I was persuaded by the sweet message of the Gospel to come to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, the precious blood of Christ that flows for all sinners. There at the foot of the cross Christ spoke peace to my soul, peace and salvation.

What has become of my hatred? It has disappeared, it is transformed into *love*. Instead of hating Jesus I love Him and His body on earth, the Church.

How did it all happen? Christ did this for me. Can He not do it for you also?

Young friend! Have you no peace? Come to Christ Jesus,

He is our Peace. Have you peace with God already? Then you can thank Him on your knees, and go every day to the blessed Fountain and drink. Thank Him that there is no more hatred in your heart, yea, not even to the Jews, a people that is otherwise very little loved in the "Christian" world.

The hour cometh, and is already, when the Church of Christ will consist of saved souls, both Jew and Gentile, and the walls of partition will be demolished.

May that day soon arise to the glory and honor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through every land, by every tongue."

Amen.



NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL.

(OSA A. LAWRENCE.)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. *Romans 1:16.*



This declaration of Paul is one of the boldest and most significant of all his utterances. It is the one true position all Christians must take, in order to render acceptable service to their Lord and Master. It is indeed the goal of living faith and loyalty to Christ, to which we as believers should strive to attain.

When Paul said he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, he meant that he was not ashamed of the principles and doctrines which Christ taught: although they, as well as His followers, at that time were held in contempt and were ridiculed by enemies of the gospel. Paul was nevertheless willing to accept the teachings of the Savior and proclaim them far and wide, that others might accept them and come to the knowledge of the truth.

In the days of Paul, Christianity was yet in its infancy and far from being the popular religion of that time. To one who dared to confess Christ as his Lord, it often meant suffering and death at the hands of heathens or some religious sects. But none of these things moved Paul, nor caused him to swerve from his course of loving Christian service.

As an example of what Paul had to suffer for the gospel's sake, I invite you to read 2 Cor. 11:24-28. He nevertheless en-

dured it all, and was able to glory in the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because he knew what a miraculous change it had wrought in his own life. The things he once loved he now hated; and the things he once hated he now loved; formerly he had persecuted the Christians and advanced against the teachings of Christ; now he was willing, yes anxious, to preach the very same doctrine to the world at any cost.

He had also observed the power of the gospel in its reforming influence in the lives of others. He had seen it shape the lives of men for better living and greater blessings in this life, and in preparing them for the life to come. Certainly, such a gospel was not a thing to be ashamed of, but rather a thing to glory in.—This was the position of the great apostle. Never ashamed of Jesus.

Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star;
He sheds the beams of light divine
O'er this benighted soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon
Let midnight be ashamed of noon:
'Tis midnight with my soul, till He,
Bright Morning Star, bid darkness flee.

Paul also realized that this gospel was to include all mankind, to the Jews first, however, then to flow from them and through them to the gentile world. It was his love for Christ and this conviction, born of the Holy Spirit, that made him so zealous in his missionary activities.

Dear Christian reader, let us realize that it is Christ's great design that we should be channels of His infinite love and blessings to the world at large. O, that we could keep these channels free from all obstructions by a holy life and a conscience void of offense toward God!

If we be filled with the love of Jesus there will be no room in our hearts for conceit, envy, jealousy, race hatred, or petty prejudices, which things are of the devil, and not of God, to whom we belong and whom we serve.

O, that we might see Christ in all His beauty, and know His marvelous love for mankind, and thereby be constrained to truly imitate Him!

The gospel of Jesus Christ gives to the world the greatest and the only true religion. It upholds the highest ideals and ethical standards of which we can conceive. It is the one religion of all men. It alone can bring comfort to the bleeding heart and peace and joy to the distressed and troubled soul.

May God through His Holy Spirit impart in us such a love for this gospel that we may never be ashamed to be ready witnesses for Christ, but, like Paul, glorify in our lives Him who is our Lord and Savior.

“O, that I could all invite, this saving truth to prove—
Show the length, the breadth, the height
and depth of Jesus’ love!
Fain I would to sinners show
The blood by faith applied!
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucified.”

Amen.



IMITATE THAT WHICH IS GOOD.

(EDW. J. ISAAC.)

Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. 3 John 11.



The life of a Christian is not always an easy one. It often entails a conflict between sin and his life with God. Sin besets him on all sides so he must ever be on his guard and fully equipped with the full armor of God.

One feature worthy of note with regard to sin is that it is rarely made unattractive to us, when we personally are involved in its temptings.

Satan is an expert in psychology and character reading and consequently uses only those means in leading us into temptation that are appealing to our individual tastes. He presents sin to us in such a way that we begin to consider it worthy of imitation—we begin to desire it and long after it.

It is therefore significant when John warns his beloved Gaius to "imitate not that which is evil." The Christian is rarely tempted by the more flagrant sins. They rather assume a refined form and as such prove very tempting.

Let us, for example, take the modern spirit of open-mindedness. The age demands a fair consideration for everything, and in this every Christian can well concur.

But then it so often leads to a belittling of our basic faith in Jesus Christ and the divinely inspired Word. Because every kind of heathen and semi-pagan doctrine is put on a par with that precious doctrine of salvation by grace. From that "broad-mindedness" which we so often emulate, arises a laxity in main-

taining Christian standards and ideals. And resulting from it comes a further imitation of "that which is evil."

John, on the contrary, advised Gaius to follow after the good. Our nature is more often inclined toward evil than toward the good and consequently our lives must be a constant striving after the good as we have been taught to know it in our Lord Jesus Christ.

He it was who revealed to us the perfect will of God and made known the real true good of which we have an example in the Beatitudes.

In imitating the good, therefore, we are following in the footsteps of the Master Himself. We thereby come into closer contact with Him, and come to know more of Him.

Our knowledge of Him then comes through experience as the result of communion with Him.

Good comes from God. He who does good is therefore of God. The life that is spent without God is a life void of good works. We often feel that the only way to approach God is to do good. Of course we are not to condone sin, but true good works can come only after we have come to know God.

"He that doeth good is of God." But God is only to be known through Jesus, for no one knoweth the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son revealeth Him. (Lk. 10, 22.)

If you wish to imitate the good, my dear reader, then know Jesus. Know Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. By His sufferings and death on the cross He removes the fundamental cause of evil in the heart of every believer in Him and makes him a child of God.

The Holy Spirit emanating from Him thus enters our hearts and gives us power and teaches us to do all those things which Christ has commanded us.

Insofar as our life is not a living according to that which is good, our life is not in harmony with God. We have by so far frustrated the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And to prevent its work is to be of a different mind with God which cannot be of God.

Let us pray for a spirit such as will always be in harmony with Him. Amen.

HOW ARE WE REDEEMED?

(S. AARON JOHNSON.)

Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. Isaiah 1, 27-28.



This is a portion of the history of Israel. At present, we see the children of Israel, the Lord's people of the old covenant, scattered about the earth, without God, without a High Priest King, and without peace.

But this is not the end, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness." The Lord will again take pity on His prodigal son, and restore him to grace. And they shall confess that which they formerly did not understand: "Surely, we have been as rebels, we have hated our commandments, and we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

Then will be fulfilled, as never before, the words recorded in Ps. 126: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen: "The Lord hath done great things for them."

But that which moves the Lord to show them mercy is not their merits. So far are they from having deserved the Lord's compassion that they have, from the time when they rejected the Lord of Glory, and murdered the prophets He sent them, in this they continually abused His wrath, and only made themselves deserve to be called His enemy. But for the sake of the love He

showed them through Christ, He still loves them, and has mercy on them. Therefore He still has thoughts of peace toward them.

The Lord's work of redemption for them was fulfilled when Christ came, and all God's promises of atonement are fulfilled, because "*the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*"

The Jews were a wonderful people, a people highly favored of the Lord. And yet there is a people on earth still more highly favored, the spiritual Israel, those who are the people of God after the Spirit and who now have conclusive right to be called the "people of the Lord."

We are, most of us, interested in the history of nations, and especially of the nations in which we ourselves belong. If we meet a person who does not take any interest in the history of his own nation, or is ignorant of the facts connected with the development of the nation to which he belongs, we feel there is something wrong with such a person. They are not concerned about the welfare of their own people. Perhaps they are ashamed of their people.

But there are persons who although they count themselves among the people of God, yet are ignorant concerning their history and status. Perhaps they are even ashamed of their own connection with the people of God.

The more we know of the history of God's people, their origin, their King, the benefits of becoming to this people, and their future prospects, the more will we esteem it a great honor and privilege to be identified with them, to labor for and with them.

The people of God are a "redeemed" people. *We all prize liberty.* And it ought to be highly esteemed. The people of Israel lost their freedom in Egypt, and how they groaned under their bondage! And later, when they had attained to freedom in the land of Canaan, they again forfeited their liberty through their own fault. They gave expression to their sorrow over their lost liberty by the waters of Babylon during their seventy years' sojourn in captivity.

In this land of ours, we prize the great boon of liberty. The benefits of liberty that we enjoy are known over the whole earth.

And yet the liberty which the people of God enjoy is of much greater value.

This redemption is a deliverance from the greatest of tyrants, from sin, death, and hell.

What a dreadful tyrant is sin!

How sin oppresses, tortures, destroys, and cripples those whom it rules! The slaves of sin are of all slaves the most to be pitied!

And yet the worst feature of this bondage consists in the fact that so many are satisfied and contented in their bonds!

And what may they expect as the wages of their slavery under sin? "*The wages of sin is death.*" "*If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.*"

And death, what a tyrant is not death!

Human power does not avail to throw off the yoke of this tyrant! Without mercy, it tears asunder the tenderest ties and fills the earth with sighs and tears!

And he who has the power of death, namely *the devil, what a dreadful tyrant he is!*

If you are a servant of sin, you are in a bondage from which you cannot release yourself! In spite of your efforts your bondage will end in eternal captivity, in the bonds of eternal death!

From this slavery, from the tyrants, sin, death, and Satan, the people of God are delivered.

Many nations have, as the records of history reveal, obtained their freedom through long and bloody wars. But this is not the case here. "*Behold what wondrous things the Lord, hath wrought!*"

Redemption is not our work, but the work of free, undeserved grace.

Our redemption was accomplished by our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He fought for it and won our redemption by the shedding of His precious blood, and by the sacrifice of His life upon the tree. He gained for us eternal righteousness, eternal redemption from sin, death, and the devil.

But, as the people of Israel again lost the liberty that was gained for them, and as many other nations have in the course of

time lost the freedom that once was theirs, so also, the people of God may lose their glorious liberty.

They may forsake their Lord.

It develops upon you, dear young friend, to abide in the Lord, He in whose Name you were baptized, and whose will and doctrine you have learned to know.

Nevertheless, even if you have broken the covenant with your Lord and Master, still He has thoughts of *peace* toward you, and will have mercy on you when you turn to Him. Therefore, return to the Lord, so that the destruction with which the transgressors are threatened, may not fall on you! Return to Him, so that you may experience the joys of His redemption now and in all eternity!

Do you reckon yourself one of God's people? a member of His redeemed Zion? Do you love God's people? Do you account it an honor to be numbered among those who abide in the Lord and are His?

Then you will never forsake the Lord or His people, but remain with Him, who redeemed you with His life of righteousness, and with His innocent sufferings and death.

The Lord comes to us, that we may come to ourselves and to Him, and that we may rejoice in being His own people, His own redeemed Zion.

“When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
This even then shall be my plea,
That Jesus lived and died for me.”

Amen.



WALK IN LOVE.

(E. O. STONE.)

"Be ye, therefore, imitators of God as beloved children: and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweet smell." Ephesians 5: 1-2.



The apostle is admonishing the Christians in Ephesus to imitate their Heavenly Father. It is natural for a child to imitate its earthly father in talents and habits. But God's essential character is love. We should, therefore, "as beloved children, walk in love." In other words, we should manifest a spirit of love in our everyday duties and in our relations to God and man. Our thoughts, words and deeds should be conceived and born in love.

It is, indeed, vain to assume the title of son without any similitude of the father. "We are sons of men when we do ill," says Augustine, the venerable teacher in the early days of Christianity, "but sons of God when we do well."

Perhaps there is nothing more trying than to imitate God in His loving kindness unto us, a fallen and perverted race. He is, indeed, merciful not only unto His spiritual children, but unto those also who have, as the prodigal son, forsaken Him. Yea, even become enemies to Him, His Word, His church and His children.

You and I should imitate Him. The false doctrine of the carnal man of old is quite popular even in our day. It is legalized under terms of justice, manliness, self-defense and patriotism.

But, note the teachings of Jesus: "Ye have heard that it was

said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Matthew 5:43-46.

Love to God and love to man is the summary of God's law. We must heed the admonition of the apostle, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:31-32. *Yes, this is Christianity!*

But how can this be accomplished by us, we who have lost the likeness of God in which we were created, who, according to our sinful nature, are selfish and too often possessed with malice and revenge? Yea, there is a possibility. The image of God is restored, through Christ, in those who believe; in those who are born again. Read John 1:12-14.

But in imitating our Heavenly Father, we have need of looking unto Jesus, for He is not only our Redeemer, but He is also our great teacher and our holy pattern. He loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God. As a man He yielded His will that it might be in harmony with God's will.

Not only in Gethsemane but throughout His whole career He constantly interpreted the words, "Father, Thy will be done." In order to save us, He died as a malefactor upon the cross. He shed His blood as a ransom for our sins.

As the self-sacrificing love of a father and mother is reflected in their children, so the love of Christ should be reflected in our lives.

Oh, that our lives, through the power and example of Christ, may be kind, pure and sanctified, thereby pleasing unto God.

"I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy child.
I long to be like Jesus,
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints His praises,
To learn the angels' song."

Amen.

FEAR THE LORD.

(INGV. HUSTVEDT.)

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Prov. 3, 30.



My dear young friend.

Here is a word of a special value and importance to you and given you by God, our dear heavenly Father. Because He is just as interested in your well-being and more so than you are yourself.

He knows the dangers that surround us and the desires that are in us and He, the Lord, is more than willing to come to our aid and assistance.

The question for you to contemplate upon is this: Are you willing to listen to the warning and *the advice which the Lord gives you* here, in order that your life may be *to you* a real happy life?

Now listen, my friend. You are today standing on the threshold of your future. The possibilities are many and promising. Great and valuable treasures are at stake. Questions come and go. What will be the future for you? Will it be a success or a failure? It all depends. Yes, it all depends upon you. You can make or unmake your own future. By following the advice of your Lord or by rejecting it. You are sowing today what you will reap tomorrow. Be careful. *Stop, look and listen!*

This is the warning, the danger signal from on high. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain. Don't fall by either of them because it will not give you what you are really and truly seeking after and longing for. You would not like to be deceived, would you? Of course not. Favor is deceiving. And you

would not care for that which is empty or of no purpose, would you? "*No*," and you say well, for beauty is vain, empty, unreal, and unsatisfying.

But the fear of the Lord is profitable to all things. The fear of the Lord will give you happiness, because it satisfies as nothing else can or will do.

The fear of the Lord will give you protection. No evil shall come near to him that feareth the Lord. And He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all ways.

The man who fears the Lord is blessed and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Ps. 1.

And he who fears the Lord shall be rewarded. To give you a crown of life at your life's end. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. To fear the Lord is to live in the sunshine of His presence, conscious of perfect harmony and oneness with Him. To fear the Lord is to trust Him, to speak to Him, communicate with Him and to have Him as my best friend and adviser.

See therefore to it that you are not led away or astray, my friend. Nor deceived by worldly favor or blinded by the vanity of beauty, but keep your spiritual eye steadfastly on your Lord and Master, who is ever watching over you and always willing to help and guide you. Your future, as well as your present life and happiness, is in God's safekeeping.

Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His word;
Make friends of God's children,
Help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing,
His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy,
The world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret,
With Jesus alone;

By looking to Jesus,
Like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct
His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy,
Be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive
Beneath his control,
Thus led by His Spirit
To fountain of love
Thou soon shall be fitted
For service above.

Amen.

A LIVING HOLY SACRIFICE.

(K. C. HOLTER.)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Rom. 12, 1, 2.



Here are many both great and small gifts and offerings to God and His kingdom. But they are all small and insignificant compared with the first and greatest offer God asks for; He wants the whole man, soul and body.

Man, the human being, consists of soul and body. The body is the dwelling place of the soul. But since man came under the influence of sin, the body is corruptible and mortal, but it shall not be destroyed; we believe in the resurrection of the body.

God's ultimate aim is to save body and soul, the whole man, so he may eternally be with God in heaven.

This glorious salvation has our Savior Jesus Christ prepared for us by His suffering, death and resurrection. "And He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty," with the same body He received here on earth.

By this He has not only lifted the soul up to God and heaven, but also the body, which He has sanctified and made holy, as Jesus himself says: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. And: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with Me where I

am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world."

Dear young friends! When you look at this and see what a glorious future God has intended for you in His Kingdom here on earth and in heaven, it is no wonder that the Apostle Paul brings forth this solemn word:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

You have received your body from God, and it is according to His will that you shall use it in His service, sacrifice it to Him. It was this you promised in the Holy Baptism, when you renounced the devil, and all his works, and all his ways, and not to "be conformed to this world." If you are like this world you will lose all; you will destroy the glorious future both for time and eternity.

Your spiritual life is manifested in your external life and manner. The outward deeds reveal the inward thoughts and desires. If you appear in the outward life, worldly, it is an evidence that you are worldly in your heart also.

You have only one body and that is your greatest visible possession. If you ruin and destroy this possession, you have nothing left.

Remember, also, that as young people you possess a great treasure, which dwindles away; keep it in honor and appreciation while you have it; it is your time of youth.

Untold is the number of men and women looking back on a ruined and destroyed life. Take heed so you in the future shall not be one of them; you will regret it, but too late; now is the time to take warning.

But if you shall be able to withstand and win the victory over your evil inclinations and the world, you must be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

"Begone vain world, with thy pleasure,
And keep thy joys far from my sight;
In thee and in thy tempting treasures
My soul no longer finds delight.
The world may seek and love its own:
I love my Jesus, Him alone.

He is my glory and my treasure,
My wisdom and my soul's delight,
In Him I find my sweetest pleasure
And all my comfort day and night.
The world may seek and love its own:
I love my Jesus, Him alone.

In weakness He my strength abideth,
He comforts me, when sad my lot;
In gloom of death He light provideth,
In death as life He fails me not.
The world may seek and love its own:
I love my Jesus, Him alone."

Amen.



THE CHRISTIAN CONDUCT.

(S. O. SIGMOND.)

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. 2 Peter 1: 5-7. Read also verses 1-4.



Knowledge, temperance, patience, Godliness, kindness, charity (love)—what a string of virtues! Yet these are not all that a child of God may possess. And some Christians have more graces than others. Nor are these Christian virtues equally manifest in the same individual. At times some seem lacking, while others are outstanding. However this may be,

it is the will of our gracious Father that we should "grow in grace and knowledge," yea, in all graces.

Are you, dear reader, anxious to do this? Are you really concerned about being well pleasing in the eyes of your Savior? And at the same time to be an example for others and a salt in the world? Yes, you are, more or less, otherwise you would not be reading this book. But you have perhaps already had some of the same experience as the apostle when he says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not." Still the Lord will abundantly bless you, and realize His purpose in you and with you?

How? In this way:

First remember—there is life in a look at the crucified One; lay hold on Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Your personal union with

only once for all, but every day. Otherwise all these virtues become only dead works and no graces at all, in the Christian sense.

This faith must be a living faith, a real trust in Jesus as your only Savior. "Abide in me and I in you," says Christ. This "abiding" on your part is expressed in a real confidential trust in Him as Giver of eternal life, as a real and everpresent Friend with whom you walk and talk and on Whom you rely, absolutely, as a Savior from sin now and forever.

"As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abideth in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." So speaks Jesus again. Does your heart say "Yea and Amen" to this? Is this your joyful experience already? Then, dear friend, you belong to that happy class of Christians who can say, "I know in Whom I believe." You can sing:

Blessed assurance—Jesus is mine!
Oh what a foretaste of glory divine!

Or you may be a true Christian, but have not yet "made your calling and election sure." Again, you may belong to those who are seeking the Kingdom of God. You wish "to see Jesus." Dearly beloved, you shall see Him!

So whether you have a full assurance of your standing or not—one thing is clear and that is, that there can be no adding of virtue until you have life in Christ Jesus.

This is the one thing needful. "Without me ye can do nothing."

Could my zeal no respite know
Could my tears forever flow
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Have you realized this great fact? Have you any experience of the expression "Jesus only"? or are you seeking and yearning for this truth? If so, blessed are you! Yea, thrice blessed! Having "obtained like precious faith" with St. Peter and all other saints, you are in position to begin to "add to your faith." Hav-

ing been justified by faith you begin on the work of sanctification. Like as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him!

By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct, His likeness shall see.

Give diligence to these things! But always in the strength of Christ, always in touch with Him, always "having His exceeding great and precious promises" before you in your diligence!

O Holy Spirit, enter in,
And in our hearts Thy work begin,
Thy temple deign to make us;
Sun of the soul, Thou Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine,
To joy and gladness wake us.
That we to Thee truly living,
To Thee giving prayer unceasing,
Still may be in love increasing.

Amen.



'THE APPAREL OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT.

(C. S. SIMONSEN.)

"Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God a great price." I Pet. 3, 3, 4.



Woman's beauty like man's strength is at the same time a protection and a weapon. God created her beautiful, in order that she might more completely fulfill the mission God has given her in the world. She must use the power she thus possesses to the glory of God and the real benefit of her fellow men.

But her beauty shall not only consist in her outward appearance, beautiful features, handsome clothes, jewelry etc. It is rather an element of the soul which is ruled and ennobled by the power of love.

One of woman's greatest temptations is vanity. If she is affected by this vice she becomes frivolously concerned about her outward appearance and gives *this* thought at the expense of her soul life. She is much disturbed about her hair dress, she frets about what jewelry to wear and how best she can apply cosmetics in an effort to stimulate nature's glow. Fashion's latest dictate is her chief worry.

Much of this may be well and good if only it is kept within the range of Christian propriety. But there is serious danger that she may through these very efforts bring herself and others into destruction. They were the immoral women who in the days of the apostles adorned themselves in the way here described by Peter.

Alas, how unfortunate it is, where a young Christian woman,

out of deference to the current fashions or the opinions of others, proceeds to copy the manners and modes of vile women, forgetting her numerous perquisites as a bride of Christ.

God wills that woman shall adorn herself.

It gives Him great joy that she is beautiful. *But* it is the heart's hidden being that He judges. And if this be properly adorned, then she will be guided by a meek and lowly spirit; highly esteemed by God. By faith and sanctification her soul is moulded as God desires it and her whole demeanor will then be guided by a consecrated life.

A consecrated woman who seeks in all things to be like her Savior and to be guided by His spirit, will not be vain, nor will she be shrewish, proud or forward either in or out of her home.

Such a woman is of tremendous worth to God's kingdom.

Her children, brethren, friends, her husband, in fact her whole circle will be affected by her virtuous life.

Her value to the kingdom will not only consist in what she does; but as well, in what she is.

To be sure, she will constantly practice well doing. Her love for Christ will not allow her to be idle. But, she will then be something big and good which will perhaps bring about as great blessings as her Christian activity. Her adornment is permanent.

When outer beauty, like the flowers, disappears, and those things she must needs decorate her body with prove worthless, then this invisable personality increases year by year until it finally unfolds itself in its full glory in heaven.

I know a robe of richest fashion,
Which hides my every sin and vice;
The Savior bought it with a price,
And paid with His atoning passion.
And alway shall this robe endure,
And make our soul's salvation sure;
It covers every blemish.

Amen.

THE HEAVENLY GUEST.

(SIGURD T. SORENSON.)

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me." Rev. 3: 20.



The door is the way to a man's soul.

And the soul of man is the dwelling place of all his affections, the home of the will and the conscience,—the abiding place of his inner spiritual being.

As compared to this soul of man, there is nothing so valuable in all the world.

The whole world, with its rich treasure of fields and forests and proud cities, would not weigh in the hand of God, so much as the soul of the smallest child.

Man does not always realize this. For in the great laboratory of the universe, there is nothing outside the heart of God, that can adequately estimate and measure the value of man's immortal life.

The mother, brooding over her stricken child, is not so tender as the Savior bending low over the fallen sinner. We catch a note of this divine compassion when, with almost melancholy solicitude He exclaims: "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul!"

Christ died for that soul.

Has it occurred to you, that this soul means *your* soul?

"Mine?" you say.

Yes. In order to save your soul, Christ climbed Calvary.

And there, placing Himself upon the cross, writing it out in His own blood, laboriously hanging it up where your eyes might see it, He told the story of how much He cared for you.

What a love was that!

How precious in His sight is your salvation.

How, unto death, He struggled for your peace!

To ignore this salvation, is to shut the door in the face of God.

It is to cut yourself off from the source of eternal life.

As a flower dies when cut off from the roots that sustain it, so you, deaf to the call of the Man on the Cross, will at last be cut off from God, and eternal darkness will close round about you.

To-day, Christ stands at the entrance of your heart.

More than once you have heard the mystic and yet definite call.

God demands admission into your life.

You are young.

Youth is the time of high aspirations, of noble ideals that shine like burning stars.

He wants to enter your ideals, and give divine guidance to your fondest aspirations.

Youth is the time of love.

Christ demands entrance into the seat of your affections,—to cleanse your passions, and direct all your loves and friendships.

Youth is bold,—like an adventurous ship, with all sails set, careless of storms or hidden dangers, but eager to be on the way. The Master desires to man the rudder, promise to pilot you through all storms and nights of darkness, past hidden rocks of temptation,—and at last will guide your ship to its anchorage by the shores of the all-sheltering God.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Do you hear the call? You say, There is about me a strange unwillingness to open; and, besides, my heart is too unclean for His coming.

Begin by learning first this lesson: You can never cleanse your own heart. When you yield admission to the Savior, He will cleanse it with His own pierced hand. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

And about the unwillingness?

Is it that you are afraid of Him?

The saints of God have always told us, The only way to run from God, is to run *to* Him.

Honestly, fully, humbly, confess your sins. It is the only way. On this narrow road, you will find pardon instead of punishment.

O, to be able to say with the psalmist, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness!"

Thus, on your bended knees, and fully trusting the promises of the expectant Guest, you will find the door swing inward to admit the waiting Savior.

And it will be a happy day, when Jesus enters your life! "I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me." He will set before you hitherto unknown resources of strength. With the psalmist you will be able to say, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

When He entered, fear flew out of the window, and all the temptors of your soul stand powerless. New foods nourish your soul.

The divine promises of His Word, the divine grace of His salvation, the heavenly food of His Sacrament, how they will nourish you in faith and hope and love!

With the prophet you can say, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Having entered your heart, the new Guest has also entered your thoughts, your affections, your daily tasks and your whole being.

You are now living in communion with God.

The words of Paul have for you a new meaning: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me;—the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

"Now admit the Heavenly Guest;
Let the Savior in!
He will make for you a feast;
Let the Savior in!
He will speak your sins forgiv'n,
And when earth-ties all are rive'n,
He will take you home to Heav'n;
Let the Savior in!"

Amen.

WHEN JESUS BECOMES YOUR GUEST.

(PEDER NORDSLETTEN.)

The sisters therefore sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick. Joh. 11:3.



Bethany! What a beautiful thought does not the name convey!

The home there—Mary's and Martha's and Lazarus' home—has, amid all ages, stood before the minds of God's people as a lovely place.

Cozy and serene did the brother and the two sisters live together. And that which thus drew these young people one towards the other and which strew

such a hallowness over their home, was this: *it was always open for Jesus.*

When the desire for comfort and companionship seized His longing spirit and when He yearned for rest after a heavy, irksome day, He would often wend His way towards Bethany—to this place of peace and friendship.

But the happiest home may soon be changed into a house of mourning. So it becomes here.

Lazarus takes sick and must go to bed. His strength gradually fails him and his sisters realize that the end is near. Doctors and medicine can no longer help him.

Heavy at heart Mary and Martha see before them only tears and the grave.

What is there now to do?

O, if Jesus had been here. Then . . .!

But not so; He is two days' journey afar.

But is it not possible to send word for Him?

Yes—they will at least try to do so.

And while the message is on its way the tears of hope trickle down the flushed cheeks of the sisters. Longing for the arrival of their true friend, Jesus, they eagerly begin to gaze towards the north-east, wondering why He is so slow to arrive.

The message reaches Jesus! It does not contain many words—only a brief greeting—but, nevertheless, it is long enough. *“Behold, he whom Thou lovest, is sick.”*

It states merely the condition in which Lazarus is. Jesus, however, understands that it implies also this: Hurry and come home to us!

And Jesus comes—the very thing that He always does when He is sent for—and in this case even with life. Although it is now four days since Lazarus was buried.

What a great privilege it is to have Jesus to resort to under the shifting scenes of life! And especially so when sickness and death visit the home.

Sometimes He may linger somewhat before He comes. But as sure as He is sent for, just so sure will He come.

Jesus is truly unequalled in every phase of human experience.

He can give aid, kindle hope, and soothe the heart-pangs where other helpers fail.

Although our prayers may be brief and stammering; yes, even of such a nature, perhaps, that others cannot understand them let us feel content that they are always understood by Jesus.

Bear in mind, young friend, that He does not inquire as to the number of words that we use, neither as to the form in which we present them. Only that you remember this: to send for Him.

When it pays to ask Jesus to come to the home where there is sickness and even death; much more so does it pay to send word for Him when one feels unhappy and is without peace with God.

Human experience has verified this again and again.

Young friend, I have something to tell you. You who have broken your baptismal covenant and are living without Christ.

You, whom the Spirit of God is calling while you are straying away from Jesus in the foreign country of sin.

You, who feel the might of the powers which are pulling you down towards the ghastly region of hell and you, too, who hear the voice which is calling you upwards towards the glories of Heaven.

You, whose life resembles that of a little sparrow on a wide, rough sea.

You do not find peace in the empty pleasures of the world nor do you really feel at home among Gods' children.

I am now judging your life by what I have experienced myself.

Tossed about, as you admit that you are—*what can you do?*

O, young man and young woman, you can do this: Send word for Jesus!

In other words: *Give Jesus permission to enter your heart!* You need not go far to find Him. It took the two sisters in Bethany two days to reach Jesus with the message. But in your case you may be able to reach Him this very day.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Rev. 3:20. And this means that Jesus is knocking now—to-day.

He knocks at the door of your heart, that He may enter in with peace and salvation: just the things for which you crave and that you so sorely need.

Would that you who are in the beautiful springtime of life do not close the heart-door to your best and truest friend!

Behold, a stranger, at the door!
He gently knocks, has knocked before;
Has waited long, is waiting still;
You treat no other friend so ill.

Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF CONDUCT.

(CLAUS MORGAN.)

“All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
Matt. 7. 12.



These are the words of the King: His Kingdom was not of this world, but He was nevertheless One to whom was given all power in heaven and on earth. To be sure there were only a few—yes very few—who appreciated Him, but that did not alter His position. His royal qualities were indeed manifested in His speech as He taught as one having authority; His enemies even admitted this fact.

In giving this law of conduct it is implied that it is no new doctrine; “this is the law and the prophets.” This rule of conduct pertaining to the relationship of man to man in their association with one another is found in the law and the principle of that law had been taught by the prophets down through the ages in no unmistakable language. Christ wanted to refresh the memory of His hearers and also prove to them that He taught no “new doctrine” — that where Scripture has spoken, every word stands for all time and cannot be amended or brushed aside.

But how was such a rule received? It is hard to conceive of the possibility that all who heard Christ on this particular occasion would agree with Him; there were undoubtedly many selfish men present. Selfish and worldly minded men care little about their fellowmen and their watchword is the same as that of Cain, “Am I my brother's keeper?” What are their fellowmen to them but mere

stepping stones to be used to attain their coveted aims? Such men lived in Christ's day and we know their relatives are far from extinct in our own day.

But there were undoubtedly many present who were impressed with the beauty of these words and the great principle they expressed. Truly such a rule of conduct was pure religion and undefiled! To many it was a great moral code and a practical precept. What changes would be wrought in the world were but the tenets of this rule carried out! There would then be no evil surmisings or suspicions; all evil speaking, abuse and backbiting would be unheard of; it would eliminate graft in the business world in the matter of buying and selling; there would be no conflict between capital and labor because then the question of service and remuneration would be amicably settled; war would be an impossibility and such conditions would obtain throughout the world that no statesman ever dreamt of. The world would then be an ideal place in which to live.

Are such conditions possible in this present dispensation?

Why cannot such conditions be realized?

Some of Christ's hearers asked themselves this question. These were beautiful words and the precept was beautiful. But how can we, who are evil and full of sin, live in this ideal relationship with our fellowmen? That is a question that too many forget to ask themselves. The truth is that apart from Christ, this rule of conduct means nothing. It floats hopelessly above our reach until we come into personal contact with Christ. By nature we are sinful and in its unregenerate state the heart is entirely selfish even though many men boast of the "golden rule" as being their religion.

Paul in his unregenerate state thought himself unblameable; he was a religious man and was very well pleased with himself. After his conversion the things that were gain to him in his unregenerate state he counted loss for Christ and presently he became a debtor to all men.

Dear reader, these words of Christ, which includes the whole duty of man towards his fellowmen, can only be a safe rule of conduct for you when you have a personal relationship with Jesus

Christ. He must reveal the selfishness of your sinful heart so that you may know that apart from Him you are not capable of doing a single good deed. But when He transforms your life you will get a mind like your Master and by His power you will be able to even love your enemies, do good to those that hate you and suffer violence a second time rather than seek revenge. It is only in Christ that you will be able to carry out this rule of conduct.

“Oh, who could fully make this his endeavor;
Self to surrender with heart and with soul!
Oh, that my all were my Jesus forever,
I am, alas, far away from the goal!
Jesus, who gav’st me an ear that is heeding,
Reach me Thy hand and Thy succor me give,
That I here after that life may be leading
Which Thy true Christians in holiness live.

Amen



*WORK FOR THAT FOOD WHICH ABIDETH.

(R. MALMIN.)

Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for him the Father even God hath sealed. John 6, 27.



God wants us to work. And work we must, the great majority of us. We must work in order to exist, if not for any other reason. This is according to God's will and the laws of creation.

But God does not wish that our salaries should be our chief end and aim.

And why not? Because He wants us to have something in return for our life here on earth.

And it is so, that he who has no higher aim in view under all his striving, than to get food and clothes, a little for luxury and amusement and some savings, he has nothing in return for his life and toil when all is over. They are all corruptible things and we must leave them.

We must leave the visible and corruptible and stand face to face with eternity and with the eternal God. If one then has lived for the temporal and transitory, and has had these things for his main and final goal, what has he left for eternity?

Nothing!

Will not that be a dreadful eternity?

And what has he to meet God with?

Nothing! except that he has wasted his life away, the life God gave us that it should be filled with eternal graces and bear blessed fruit—for eternity.

Therefore Jesus says: Work not for the food which perisheth! If we do have to work with temporal and corruptible things, we must not aim at them as our main and final goal.

There is something else and something better to work for; the food which abideth unto eternal life.

Unto eternal life. By that we do not mean something that can be taken hold of when we are leaving this life. Man is an eternal being even here on earth. We have the immortal soul with the needs of the immortal soul.

Today and every day we need the food which abideth unto eternal life. Without that our life will not be life, but death and corruption—spiritually, in the soul.

But what then is the food which abideth unto eternal life? It is the grace in Jesus Christ. On Him hath the Father put His own seal.

In Jesus is guaranteed pure and nourishing food for the soul.

The words and deeds of Jesus bear the seal of godliness and eternity. His resurrection is a testimony from God the Father that the crucified Jesus Christ has atoned for our sins, and that in Him there is everlasting life for us.

Experience shows us also that in Him a poor sinner receives peace through forgiveness of sins and becomes a child of God. He who has forgiveness of sins has life and salvation.

He who is a child of God is well provided for, both in time and for eternity.

Do we then need to *work* for that food? Is not the grace of Jesus free? Do we not receive it freely without our own efforts, deeds or endeavors to earn it?

Yes, we do, and that is why the gospel satisfies the need of the soul and *Jesus is the "Bread of Life."*

But if we have tasted this bread of life there is every requirement to work for the appropriation of Jesus and His mercy, more and more. To work ourselves into the gospel, revealed in Word and Sacrament.

But the gospel does not only want to be appreciated. When we take it to ourselves it will also become a living power in heart and life. From this new spiritual life will again flow activity.

We will work on our own sanctification, and for the salvation of others.

In this way the kingdom of God within us grows outwardly also, until it reaches its goal here and in eternity.

That is something to work for. We have something in return for that. *Something which abideth unto eternal life.*

My Lord, Thou here hast led me
Within Thy holiest place,
And there Thyself hast fed me
With treasures of Thy grace:
And Thou has freely given
What earth could never buy,
The Bread of Life from heaven,
That now I shall not die!

Amen.



THE GLORY OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

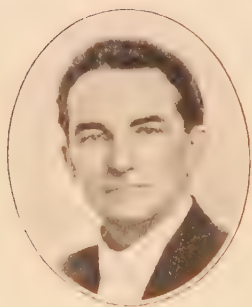
(K. XAVIER.)*

I.

How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts- My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee, Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee: in whose heart are the ways of them: Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

To Thy temple I repair:
Lord, I love to worship there;
When, within the veil, I meet
Christ before the mercy-seat.



Mentioning the "House of God," we refer to the church building in the midst of a Christian congregation. The real glory of this house is an *inner*, not an outer one.

True, the church building may be beautifully and richly equipped. Even a disbeliever—with some sense of beauty—may see and appreciate it. But only a true child of God, with an open eye of faith, can see and value the *inner* glory of God's house.

Where the external glory is lacking, he nevertheless sees the inner glory—perhaps only as broken and scattered rays of beauty; and still this beauty is of heavenly origin.

* I and II should preferably be read together. The division, however, is made for convenience.
J. H.

God dwells in this house. And this is the very glory of the house—to the believer. God dwells there with His grace and blessing. And this glory of God's house is revealed in His Son.

It is through Jesus Christ that the glory of the house of God is open to us. Where the people of God are gathered in His name, **He is in their midst. And He is always with them.**

In God's house the soul finds refuge from the vice and danger of this world, even at the altars of the Lord of hosts—as the sparrow and the swallow.

There the hearts may be opened in confidence unto the Lord and the burdens placed at His feet.

There the soul may soar on the wings of prayers and the singing of hymns, thanking and praising the heavenly Father for all His grace and His loving gifts.

There you may hear the voice of our Lord through the preaching: warning, admonishing, guiding, forgiving,—ever tender and inviting.

There are the rays of God's glory and love, penetrating into the soul, diffusing into it warmth and light.

For this reason the believer loves the house of God—loves the altars of the Lord, loves even the very entrance, the threshold, leading into the house of God.

He would rather stand or sit at the threshold of God's house, than dwell in the tents of wickedness, be they ever so richly decorated, attracting the physical eye.

He would even prefer the "courts," prefer to stay outside, but be *near* God's house. For there he is near God, near His glory, near His loving protection. Rather *one* day in the "courts," than a *thousand* days where the godless are enjoying the glory of this world. For the glory of God's house is beautifully revealed to him even in the "courts" or on the threshold of this house.

O how holy is this place
Where the Lord a house hath given!
Here we come before His face;
This must be the gate of heaven.
Here His Word proclaims His grace.
O, how holy is this place!

Amen.

THE GLORY OF GOD'S HOUSE.

(K. XAVIER.)

II.

O Lord God of hosts hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He Himself withhold from them that walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee. Psalm 84.

Lord of the worlds above,
How pleasant and how fair
The dwellings of Thy love
Thine earthly temples are!

The church building is also an emblem of God's spiritual house. His *congregation*.

The believer loves the congregation of God. There he is ever near God. There he may always commune with his beloved Savior. There the Spirit of Jesus enters his heart. And there he may ever serve his God and his Savior.

The spiritual house of the congregation rests upon the "Rock of Ages"—Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone.

The teaching of the prophets and the apostles forms the foundation. On this foundation the believer is ever safe against the storms and the floods of this world.

Upon the congregation rests the peace and blessings of God. He richly and abundantly showers His gifts—spiritual and bodily—over His children from above.

God's congregation may be called the "courts" of His heavenly house, where His glory shall be revealed in its perfect beauty, without hindrance and delay. There nothing shall cover over and hide the eternal glory of the heavenly house. Hence, rather *one*

day here in the "courts," than a *thousand* days in the "tents" or palaces of wickedness.

The smallest ray of inner glory of God's congregation, penetrating through the humble cover of this earthly existence, is worth more than an ocean of rays from the glory of this world.

The humblest position or the humblest vocation here in the Lord's service is to be prepared to reigning as a king among the godless.

To be a doorkeeper was in the Orient looked upon as a position of trust. And even though it among us may be considered a very humble occupation,—it is nevertheless great to be allowed to open the door for God's people and for the Lord Himself.

Even though one, as the lame person before the beautiful temple door, had to be at the threshold of God's house, begging for grace as the greatest of sinners,—the place is still of greater glory than the richest palace. For soon the door may be opened—as to the lame one—opened to the sin-sick, seeking for spiritual cure, and suddenly he may find himself within the glory of God's house, praising and glorifying the Lord with a jubilant voice.

The glory of this world vanishes sooner or later. Its beauty will be quenched in the outer darkness. The glory of God's house is ever growing in beauty and richness, until it reaches its consummation in the eternal glory of heaven.

Blessed is the one who loves the few and broken rays from the glory of God's house, revealed to him even in the "courts" or on the threshold. Once he shall see the full, the consummate glory face to face, when he shall enter in from the "courts" and step across the threshold of his heavenly home.

We love Thine altar, Lord;
O what on earth is dearer?
For there, in faith adored,
We draw Thy presence nearer;
We love the Word of life,
The Word that tells of peace,
Of comfort in the strife,
And joys that never cease.

We love to sing below
For mercies freely given;
But most we long to know
The triumph-song of heaven.
Lord Jesus, give us grace
On earth to love Thee more,
In heaven to see Thy face,
And with Thy saints adore.

Amen.

LOVE FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD.

(G. T. LEE.)

Psalm 26 8: Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth.



We know from God's own Word that He is omnipresent, and there is no place where we can flee from His spirit of His presence.

"If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right

hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

And still God has an habitation, a special place where His honor dwelleth, where the glory of the Lord shall appear. He has set aside a place where we can meet Him and receive special blessings, a house of God, a gate to heaven.

At the entrance of the magnificent cathedral of Throndhjem, built in memory of the patron saint of Norway, Olaf Haraldson, we read these words: "This is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven." This inscription we can place at the entrance of every church, however humble, where true Christians assemble in the name of Jesus to hear His Word preached, and where His followers gather to sing His praise.

"Where two or three are gathered in my name there I am in the midst of them," is the gracious promise of our Lord and Savior.

He might also now appear visibly and stretch forth His hands

for blessing as He did the day of His resurrection, but He will not appear in visible form before His second coming in the clouds of heaven; but He is surely with His disciples unto the end of the world. Let us therefore always enter the house of God with profound reverence, and remember the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth be silent: let us enter with prayer and a sincere desire to receive a blessing from God, and we shall never be disappointed.

Do you love the house of God, the habitation of the Lord?

Do you believe His gracious promises and long to be in His presence?

Have you that yearning which is expressed by the prophet when he says: "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Here is a test for your spiritual condition.

On your confirmation day you promised to serve the Lord and was reminded that in order to keep this promise, it was necessary to be instant in prayer, to hear the Word of God, diligently to come to the Lord's Table, and to be on guard against temptation.

Are you following these admonitions?

Remember that the last thing a person will cling to, even after falling from grace, is an occasional visit to the house of God. But he goes without love, without faith, without joy, reluctantly, and as mere conformity. If you have lost this desire for the house of God, for the association with His followers, if you find no comfort in His Word, and the spirit of prayer has died out, spiritual death has come into your soul, and this accounts for the lack of interest and appreciation. You have starved your soul, you have neglected to nourish the spiritual life, and there is nothing but spiritual death, darkness, and desolation, no matter how educated and intelligent you may be in matters pertaining to this world. *You are no longer talking with God*, you do not with the eye of faith see the Invisible One who is near you, and longing for you to come back to His fold.

Return to God and rejoice with them that say: "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Lord, my God, I come before Thee,
Do not hide Thy face from me;
Where we find Thee and adore Thee
There a heaven on earth must be.
To my heart, O enter Thou,
Let it be Thy temple now.

Here Thy praise is gladly chanted,
Here Thy seed is duly sown;
Let my soul, where it is planted,
Bring forth precious sheaves alone,
So that all I hear may be
Fruitful unto life in me.

Amēn.



THE GREAT NEED OF THE CHURCH.

(P. R. SYRDAL.)

"Now, therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness." II Chron. 6:41.



Our text is a part of King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. It was completed after many years of labor. It was a well-built edifice with massive walls and beautiful decorations. But something was needed,—the presence of the Lord.

The beautiful temple would be but a mass of stone and wood, cold and empty, without the presence of the Lord, for whom it was built. Their services with splendid ritual and beautiful song would be but an empty form, unless it was filled with the spirit and power of the Lord.

The Jews, a thousand years later, experienced the awful reality of it, when the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Do we realize that we need the presence of the Lord in our churches?

Do we realize the truth of the word of Jesus when He said: "Apart from me you can do nothing?"

Do we pray for the presence of the Lord in our services, in our young people's meetings, in all the activities of our church? We build beautiful churches, we have a splendid ritual, we have our many organizations,—clubs, guilds, programs and socials. The visible machinery is in working order.

Some are satisfied with mere externalities, others work and

worry and fret, and realize that we accomplish so little of real abiding value, realize that there is something lacking. We have forgotten the words of Jesus: "Apart from me, ye can do nothing." We have forgotten the words of St. Paul: "I can do *all* things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

Let us pause a moment in our work and our worry, and lift up our voice to the Lord and pray. "Arise, O Lord God, we cannot do without Thy presence. Come into Thy resting place, Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength. Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me."

Solomon prays that God would arise and come into His resting place. He and *the Ark of His strength*.

The Ark was the *mercy-seat*. *God abiding in our midst*; God in His Sacraments of mercy and grace. In the holy place He dwelt to bless and strengthen His people.

And God is in His Gospel of peace and pardon. That will make God's people strong. It is when we rejoice in the assurance of God's mercy and pardon that we are strong to live, and to serve, and to sacrifice for the Lord. To fight the battles against sin, the world, temptations, doubts and fear.

He prayed for a sanctified ministry. "*Let Thy priests, O Lord, be clothed in salvation.*" No garment is so resplendent as that of a holy character. And he would have all his people adorned in the same manner.

We have no special priesthood in the new covenant. The apostle Peter writes to the Christian churches: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood."

Is it not true that the church is exceedingly like "the world?" Those outside the church are not usually impressed by our church buildings, our profession, our organizations, our programs, and all the machinery of modern church organizations merely, but by the new and sanctified life.

It has been said that the great evangelical revival began, not with the reclamation of the depraved, but with the enrichment of the redeemed. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." John 15:5.

"Let thy saints rejoice in goodness." Happiness and a holy life go together. If we live in God's presence we shall be able to do what St. Paul admonishes the Philippians to do: "Rejoice in the Lord always. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." John 15:11.

Let us pray with the disciples at Emmaus: "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent." And pray it in song:

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Amen.



A KIND COMMAND.

(J. G. HULTRANS.)

"And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" Judges 6:14.



It would almost seem that the Lord wanted Gideon to do this great task in his own strength. It often seems that the Lord speaks to man in His Word as if man could do something in his own power.

Jesus often spoke to those He helped as if those whom He helped had by their faith helped themselves. "Thy faith has made thee whole." "All is possible for him that believe."

If we read a little more from the conversation between God and Gideon we see that it was not in his own strength that Gideon should conquer the Midianites.

At first Gideon understood it to mean that he was expected to conquer the enemies in his own power and therefore he said to the Lord: "*Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?*" Then the Lord answered him, *Surely I will be with thee and thou shall smite the Midianites as one man.*"

This same promise follows the commandment even today. If we listen to the Lord's command He will be with us in His might.

We know how wonderfully God helped Gideon. As he went in true faith that God would be with him, he found that God so overruled the enemies that they slew each other and Gideon and his followers saw how great things the Lord did for them over against the enemies.

So shall also we see God's wonderful works, if we in faith follow His words and trust in Him that He is with us.

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Though press'd by ev'ry foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!—

That bears unmoved the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile.

Our God has many things for us to do and we think like Gideon that we are not able to do this or that task, but then we should remember that God always goes with those who are willing to obey God's commandment.

God has much work for the young of our day, if they are only willing to consecrate their young lives to the Master's service.

Comparatively few today are willing to serve the Lord, as there is not money enough in it. But hear, young folks: "What does it profit a man if he could gain the whole world," but by so doing he would lose his soul?

Therefore, when God calls you, saying: "Go today and work in my vineyard," do not ask first of all how much is it in it in dollars and cents, but rather say: "Lord, here am I, send me." Let the Lord use you as best pleaseth Him in His kingdom, whether it be in an obscure place or in an exalted position.

If He calls you to be a Sunday school teacher or a preacher or a deaconess, say, "*Lord, here I am, send me.*"

Think of the great victory that was won by Gideon and his few men.

Think how many victories over sin and unrighteousness that have been won by those who have been willing to go on God's bidding and do what He commanded.

Dear young friend, *consecrate your life in the Master's service* and you shall see the victory that God calls you to gain!

Friend, remember that you always should be wholeheartedly on Christ's side—Take a decisive stand for Him and His great cause.

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this His glorious day;
Ye that are men, now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Your courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.”

Amen



THE PARTING WORDS OF CHRIST.

(T. T. ROAN.)

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 28, 18-20. •



On a mountain in Galilee, by appointment, Christ met the eleven disciples.

There is no greeting. No veiled personality to be unveiled, no affording of a demonstration of the reality of His appearance as there had been at previous meetings.

He stands amongst them as the King speaking solemn words of claim, commission and promise.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." The words express unconditional unlimited authority and sovereignty. Christ had shown His power.

The death and resurrection are amongst the most verifying proofs.

Men shall become participant of His work and His everlasting glory. Those who conform to Him through faith, love and obedience. Christ shall invest them with power.

There is nothing more striking in the entire number of incidents of those forty days after the resurrection than the prominence of the words spoken at this parting on the mountain.

Because He possesses power, you are charged with the duty of winning the world for Him.

The great redeeming work must go on and His servants are *commanded* and set the deed with Faith and obedience to God to baptize and to teach.

We have ordained men who preach and baptize. They are *not* a part of the whole. All the believers are called to work. The work is varied.

The church, young folks and old people are to be taught that Jesus is the way to salvation for all those who believe.

The church has many activities and the purpose is to instruct, edify and evangelize.

This work must not only extend to the civilized parts of the world, but also to the uncivilized.

There is a number of young people of our church who can readily confess Christ when called upon to do so. But there is something that is still more important and that is *to live Christ*.

That is the weightiest and most convincing testimony.

So many of our young people are waiting to be urged and encouraged and tugged about, invited in all sorts of ways in order to take part in the furtherance of the Lord's cause.

If they can not hold a prominent position they choose to stay away or remain passive members.

But this you must not be guilty of. Not if you love Jesus.

Then you will rather ask yourself: *What can I do for my Master?* If I can not be a teacher or a leader there is a place for me to do just as important work in His kingdom.

You want to be present at the meeting and services of the church. Visit the sick. Cheer the faint. Help raise the fallen. And remember to be fervent in prayer.

It depends on how much power you let the Lord be permitted to give you. His resources are never drained.

Christ says: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

God has revealed Himself in His Word. Constantly meditate upon the Word of God until your mind and heart will be filled with the knowledge of God's will. It will be carried out in your own life and in the life of your fellowmen.

"I am with you always" and "without me, ye can do nothing."

To live with Jesus is a daily companionship. Who is more trustworthy and who has done more for me than Jesus?

And the expression, "*I am*" covers all the varieties of "I was," "I am" and "I shall be."

"I am with you always" assures us that He will be with us both in days of sorrow and joy, in sickness and good health, in darkness and sunshine, in failure and success.

He will be with us through it all.

"If a man love me he will keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with Him."

Lord of the Church, we humbly pray
For those who guide us in Thy way,
And speak Thy holy Word:
With love divine their hearts inspire,
And touch their lips with hallowed fire,
And needful grace afford.

Help them to preach the truth of God,
Redemption through the Savior's blood:
Nor let the Spirit cease
On all the Church His gifts to shower;
To them a messenger of power,
To us, of life and peace.

Amen.



THE REJOICING HARVESTERS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

(SIVERT NESDAL.)

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psalm 126, 5, 6.



He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Our passage forms the last two verses of a song used at the great festivals of Israel. A sentiment of hope, gratitude, and rejoicing permeates this song. The Lord's wonderful delivery of the captives of Zion from the Baby-

lonian exile caused them to become like dreaming ones.

However, it was no dream; they were really permitted to return to the Promised Land, to the Holy City. With exceeding joy they meditated on the Lord's mercy and wonderful salvation.

But some very heavy tasks awaited them. The land had been ravaged; it resembled a wilderness. It had to be cleared, ploughed, and sown before it would blossom and bear fruit. The walls of Jerusalem were leveled with the ground; these had to be constructed before the city could enjoy peace and protection. Only ashes and ruins remained of Solomon's beautiful temple; a new one had to be built and adorned before the worship of Jehovah could be performed in all its solemnity.

It was indeed a time of hard work: clearing, sowing, and restoration. The difficulties caused tears to flow. The weeds were tough, the soil hard, and the weather uncertain. Would it then be wise to throw out the small amount of precious seed in spite of so many unfavorable circumstances?

External enemies were eager to prevent the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem.

Would it be worth while commencing? The inspired singer is not in doubt. The harvest, the results, will more than outweigh the hardships. "*They that sate in tears, shall reap in joy.*" It is a feature of the Old Testament to place labor and its reward in quick, direct succession. And so it actually happened in this case, where the work of restoration was energetically pushed. The walls of Jerusalem were built in fifty-two days.

Also in the new dispensation there is in the Kingdom of God a work of clearing and construction, a time of sowing and reaping. We cannot here go into the details of the activities in question.

We shall only call attention to the fact, that in the New Testament the causes and effects do not always succeed one another so immediately and apparently as in the Old Testament.

True enough, Jesus says (Matt. 5, 4): "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." But He does not say that it shall come to pass as quickly and naturally as autumn follows spring.

In the spiritual sphere it shall come to pass, that one soweth and the other reapeth. "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." (Joh. 4, 37-38.) Here we are entirely on New Testament grounds.

It may well happen, that in place of a speedy and direct harvest the first reward of the sower—in addition to his personal toil and sacrifices—will be hatred and persecution.

"Ye also shall bear witness," says Jesus (Joh. 15, 27); but in order that His disciples should not be offended, he added: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God a service" (Joh. 16, 1-2.)

These are seemingly harsh conditions for a sower, a witness to the truth.

Many are tempted to lower the requirements, to make compromises, to wish above all to be considered a success by men.

But, O you, dear young people, possessing courage and

strength, remain faithful to your high ideals; be faithful to the truth, though it shall bring you on the cross.

In fact we are not to work, to show faithfulness, primarily for the sake of the reward. The harvest may escape our attention; it may—by human judgment—be detracted from us and ascribed to others. But this must not prevent us from doing our work.

May be it is a rare instance, but all the more worthy of notice: a farmer in straitened circumstances, with many small children in the family, told me, that he did not cultivate the soil for the sake of the money or the crops; but in obedience to God's commandment telling us to subdue the earth.

Now, if a manual laborer can see in such an idealistic light the work on which he is dependent for the daily bread to himself and his big family, how much more ought not a spiritual worker to perform his task regardless of reward.

But there will be harvest, our passage tells us.

A diligent, pious boy and girl will build a good home, educate children to become good citizens of both the earthly and of the heavenly kingdom.

A pastor will find fruit of his labor in the fact, that spiritual life is created and nourished in his congregations.

A theological professor can hardly wish for a better harvest, than out of the variously endowed students to form an enlightened, diligent, and faithful army proclaiming and advancing the Gospel of Christ.

A missionary will consider himself more than repaid, if by the creative Word of God he can dispel the chaos and darkness of heathenism, and kindle the evangelical light, hope, and faith in the hearts of the heathens.

A Christian assembly in festive array gathered around Word and Sacraments, where formerly only half-naked heathens skipped about, is a preliminary fruit and harvest.

But the final and eternal harvest we prefer to leave to the Lamb who has bought us all with His blood.

Christ is the real sower. He has sown, not only in tears, but in blood. He is the harvest, the sheaves, and the triumph when

the great multitude arrayed in white robes shall stand before the throne and sing the praise of God and the Lamb.

Then hail! ye mighty legions, yea,
All hail! now safe and blest for aye;
And praise the Lord, Who with His Word
Sustained you on the way.
Ye did the joys of earth disdain,
Ye toiled and sowed in tears and pain;
Farewell, now bring your sheaves, and sing
Salvation's glad refrain.
Swing high your palms, lift up your song,
Yea, make it myriad voices strong:
Eternally shall praise to Thee,
God and the Lamb, belong!

Amen.



THE JOY OF SEEING GOD.

(MARTIN HEGLAND.)

And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.
Rev. 22:4.



You want to be happy, do you not? Happy in time, and happy in eternity?

In what does true happiness consist? It may be defined and described in various ways, but this is the way the psalmist puts it: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16: 11.) And when John wants to describe the blessedness of the saved in the heavenly city he sums it all up in this expression: "And they shall see His face."

It is remarkable to note what a glorious conception the thought of seeing God has seemed to the people of God. Thus we read: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." (Ps. 17:15). Paul says: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." (1 Cor. 13: 12). And John: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2).

Surely it will be an expressibly glorious, joyous, and blessed experience to see God.

But it is clear that it will not be a joy for all people to be in the presence of God and see Him face to face. It will be a terrible experience for the ungodly. When the Lord comes again they will cry to the mountains and the rocks: "Fall on us, and hide

us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

For whom, then, will it be an unspeakable joy to see God? For those who have God's name in their foreheads. John says: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousands, having His Father's name written in their foreheads." (Rev. 14: 1.)

Again, how does one obtain God's name in one's forehead? The process begins in Baptism. Then we receive the sign of the cross, but both upon our foreheads and upon our breasts in token that we shall believe on the crucified Lord Jesus Christ. Then we become God's children. Then our hearts are cleansed by the washing of regeneration. And "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

This truth, that it is the pure in heart who shall see God is strongly emphasized in the Scriptures. Among other testimonies we have these: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." (Ps. 24:3.) "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." (Ps. 73: 1.)

It is the work of God that our hearts are cleansed and it is a process that continues throughout life to receive God's impress upon us. It is the intention of God that we should become more and more like Him.

That transformation takes place when we keep close to Him by the use of His Word and Sacrament, by prayer and meditation, and constantly strive to do His will. Then the Lord will do His work in us. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thes. 4:3.) Paul describes the process and the result: "But we all, with open face *beholding* as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

Is not that a splendid thought, friend, that we may be transformed from glory to glory? Is there anything in life greater than to become more and more like God, that the image of God destroyed by sin may be restored?

Surely it is an invigorating thought that the mean must yield to the noble, the unholy to the beautiful, the sinful to the holy, *and then at last we may see Him as He is.*

Pray for that, dear friend.

Pray for a cleansed heart.

Pray that you may be protected against sinning.

Pray that you may become more and more like Christ.

Then shall you experience fulness of joy in the presence of God, and pleasures at His right hand forever more.

My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thou everlasting friend!
On Thee I stay my trusting heart,
Till faith in vision end.

Amen.



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